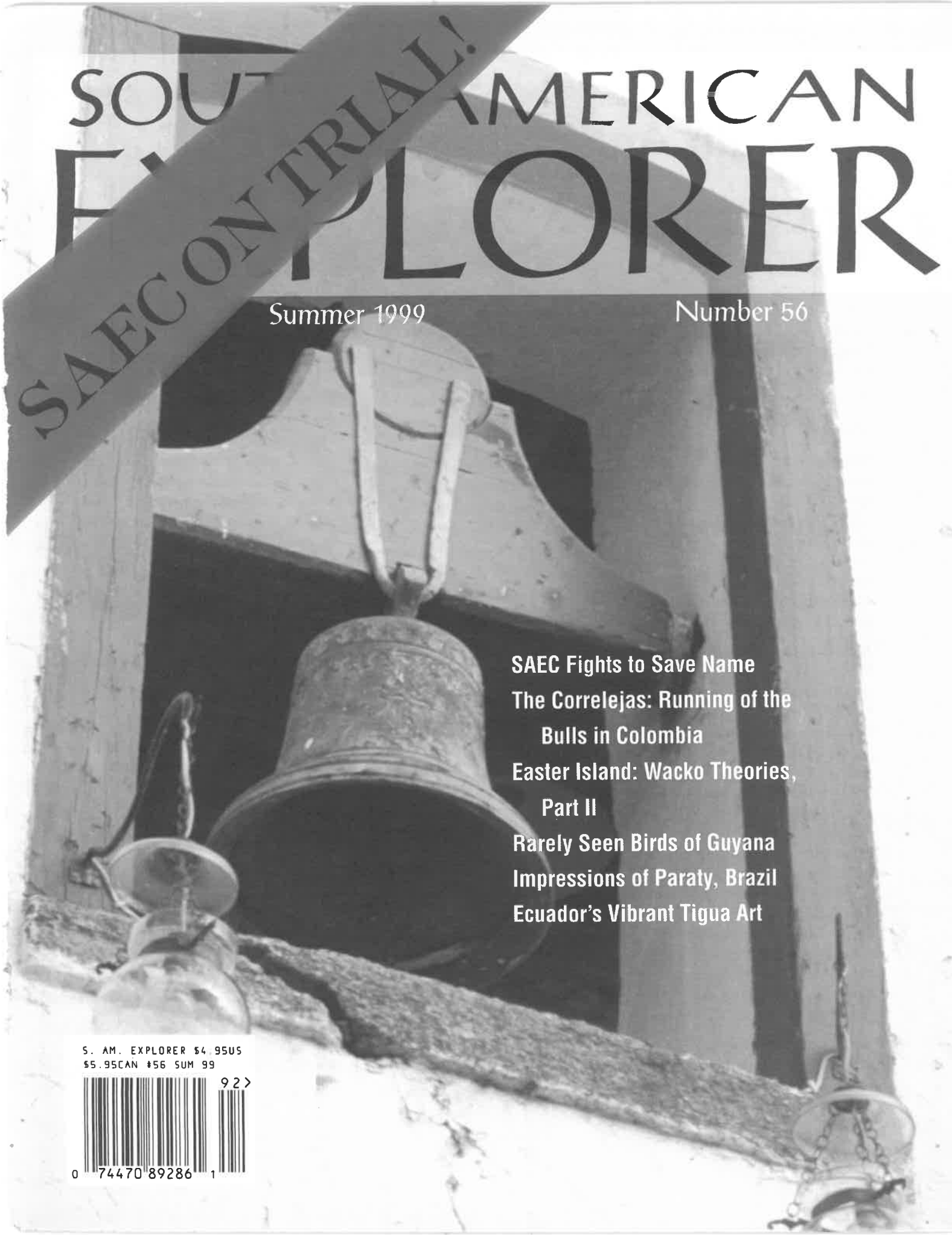
SOUTH AMERICAN EXPLORER

SAEC ON TRIAL!

Summer 1999 Number 56



SAEC Fights to Save Name

The Correlejas: Running of the Bulls in Colombia

Easter Island: Wacko Theories, Part II

Rarely Seen Birds of Guyana

Impressions of Paraty, Brazil

Ecuador's Vibrant Tigua Art

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Explore South America with the

South American Explorers Club

The South American Explorers Club

is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. With Clubhouses in Quito, Ecuador, and Lima, Peru, and U.S. headquarters in Ithaca, New York, the SAEC collects and makes available to its members up-to-date, reliable information about Central and South America.

Membership is US $40 ($70 couple) per year. Residents outside the U.S. add US $10 (US $7 for Canada) for postage. Those wishing to sign up in the United Kingdom can join through Bradt Publications (Please allow 4-6 weeks to receive membership cards), 41 Nortoft Road, Chalfont St. Peter, Bucks SL9 OLA, U.K.

Aims and Purposes:
The South American Explorers Club was founded in 1977 to:

- Further the exchange of information among travelers, outdoors people and researchers
- Support scientific field exploration and research in the social and natural sciences
- Promote field sports such as mountaineering, white water running, hiking, caving, biking and others.
- Awaken greater interest in and appreciation for wilderness conservation and wildlife protection.
- Receive contributions for projects aimed at conserving natural resources and improving social conditions in Latin America.

South American Explorer:
A 64-page quarterly magazine with articles on adventure travel, scientific discovery, history, archaeology, mountaineering, native peoples, languages, anthropology, geology, and more.

Membership Services include:
Knowledgeable Staff: Our friendly staff and volunteers provide advice and practical information to members.

Networking: We assist members seeking travel companions for a trip/expedition, or seeking to contact experts in a particular field.

Trip Reports: Trip Reports provide specialized information on just about everything—climbing Aconcagua, volunteering, learning Spanish, lining up a local tour operator, white-water rafting, hiking the Darien Gap, visiting the Galapagos, etc.

Maps: The Club maintains a collection of topographical, geological and road maps for member use and purchase.

Lending Library: There is an extensive library of both English and Spanish books at Clubhouses in Quito and Lima.

Merchandise for sale: Books, maps, tapes, T-shirts and other items are on sale at Clubhouses or through the Club's catalog.

Trip planning: Members can call upon their Club for help and trip planning information.

Discounts: Members receive discounts from many local tour operators, hotels and language schools.

Additional Member Services at Quito and Lima Clubhouses:
Equipment Storage, Mail, Phone and Fax Service, Book Exchange Library, Message Board, E-mail Service.

South American Explorers Club Catalog:
The Club's annual catalog contains books, maps, music and language tapes. Please call or write the Ithaca office to request a copy of the latest catalog. Include $3.00 if catalog is to be mailed outside the U.S.

To join the Club: Contact us at our U.S. headquarters, use the order form on page 63, or sign up at one of the clubhouses.

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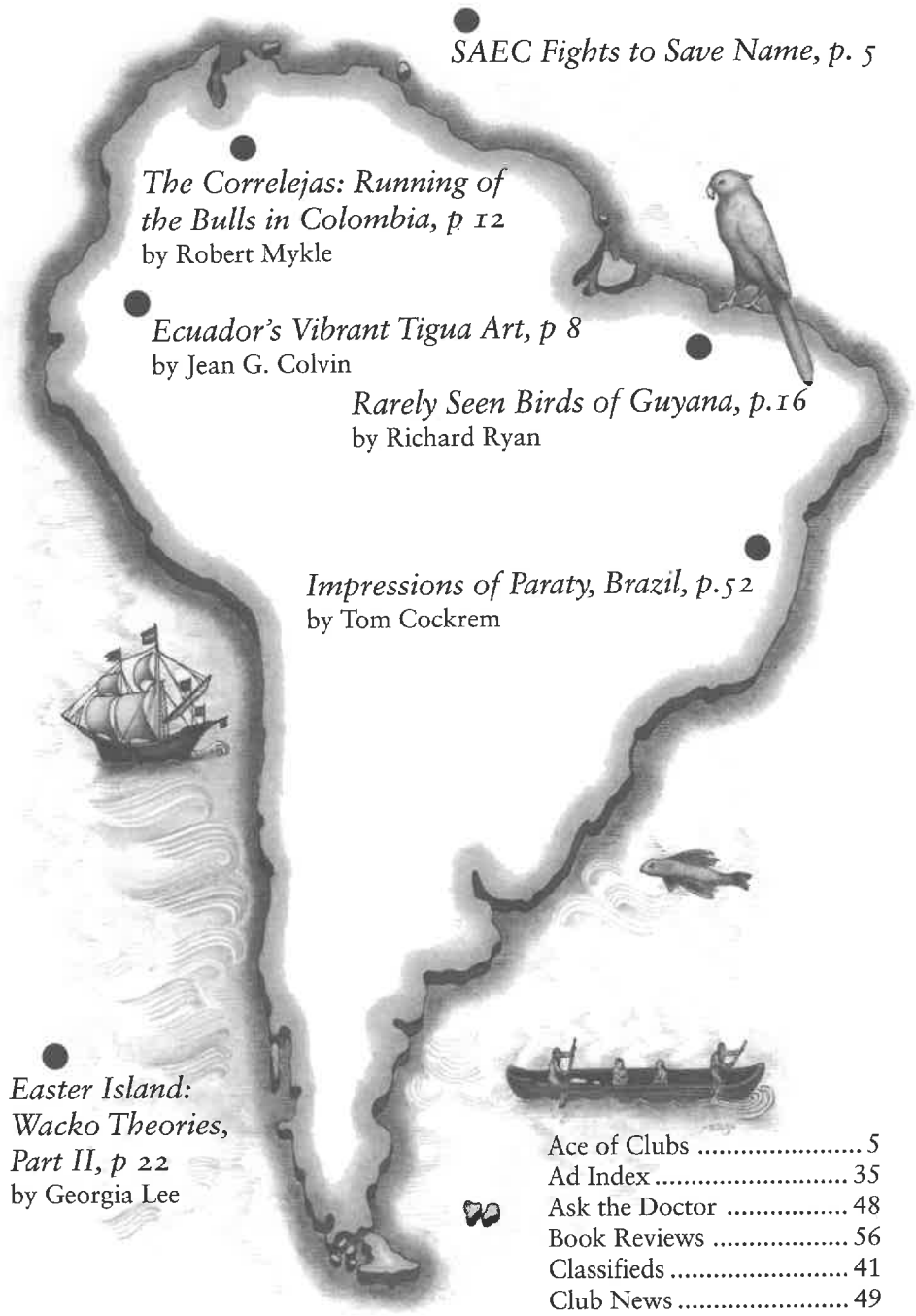

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The *South American Explorer* is the quarterly journal of the South American Explorers Club, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation located at 126 Indian Creek Road, Ithaca, NY 14850, telephone (607) 277-0488. A one-year subscription is U.S. $22.00, additional $10.00 ($7.00 for Canada) for overseas postage. No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior written consent of the publisher. All statements in articles and advertisements are those of the authors and advertisers and do not necessarily represent the views of the South American Explorers Club or the *South American Explorer*. Copyright © 1999. All Rights reserved. Peru Clubhouse: Casilla 3714, Lima 100, Peru (street address: Avenida Republica de Portugal 146, Breña, Lima), telephone (511) 425-0142. Ecuador Clubhouse: Apartado 17-21-431, Eloy Alfaro, Quito, Ecuador, (street address: Jorge Washington 311 y L. Plaza, Quito), telephone (5932) 225-228. Reprints of articles are available from the Ithaca office. Unsolicited articles must include a self-addressed, stamped envelope; photographs should be insured or registered. Neither the South American Explorers Club nor the *South American Explorer* is responsible for material lost or damaged in the mail. Website: http://www.samexplo.org. The South American Explorers Club is not affiliated with The Explorers Club.™

To the Editor:

I enjoyed Victor Ponce's piece on Alexander von Humboldt's noticing that the Otomac Indians of the Orinoco enjoyed eating earth ("Alexander von Humboldt on Geophagy," Issue 55, Spring 1999).

There is a more recent example of a tribe that also enjoys dirt. (No, not the *Hustler* variety!) In November 1953, when Orlando and Clàudio Villas Boas made contact with the Mentuktire (a Kayapó tribe, then known as Txukarramãe) on the Jarina tributary of the Xingu in central Brazil, they noticed the fearsome warriors pausing during their march to scoop up handfuls of earth. This confirmed what the Villa Boas had heard about the warlike tribe. When they reached their village, they found that earth played a large part in these people's diet.

The brothers assumed that the lumps of earth were pieces of termite mounds that the Indians devoured for the tasty and protein-rich insects—as the Yanomami also do. But when the British film maker Adrian Cowell was with these Kayapó a few years later, his friend Rauni suddenly sat on a river bank and popped two large lumps of sand into his mouth. Cowell noticed that when Rauni drank from a puddle he stirred as much mud as possible into his drink. When Cowell asked Rauni what it was like, the Indian said it was lovely. So the intrepid Englishman tried a lump of earth. He found it "unexpectedly easy to swallow and in consistency and taste very like a certain breakfast food which it would be unwise to name." (*The Heart of the Forest*, p. 236)

Eating earth cannot be all bad. The Mentuktire are tremendously fit, and Rauni is a great character in the history of the Xingu.

(By the way, Adrian Cowell has just made a new television series about uncontacted Brazilian tribes. I hear that it is as brilliant as his prize-winners "The Tribe that Hides from Man" and "The Decade of Destruction.")

I'm glad to see that the Club and magazine are flourishing. Congratulations!

Best wishes,
John Hemming

To the Editor:

To translate a Spanish menu, I tried using the Alta Vista Translation Web Site and the translation-reverse-translation method referred to in Issue 54's "Ace of Clubs" column (Issue 54, Winter 1998). Here's the English version of some Spanish culinary delights, as rendered in this linguistic Cuisinart:

Couch of Smoky Salmon
Cocktail of Brave and Rib
Tigers (4 Units)
Fused Cheese
Padded Olives
Ham and Cheese in Two Floors
Sew for Many (groups)
Squids to the Romans
Salmon to the Iron
Eggs to the Flemish
It Cream of Shellfish
(and the *especialidad de la casa*:)
Varied Fleas (six departures in half) accompanied by an Orgasm of Hot Special Breads.

I invite readers to submit their recipes for making these treats, and their own best guesses as to the gastronomic reality underlying the translation.

Doug Vaughan

To the Editor:

I regret that we won't be renewing our membership. But the SAEC was helpful in helping me get to South America before my 90th birthday!

Thanks, and keep up the good work!

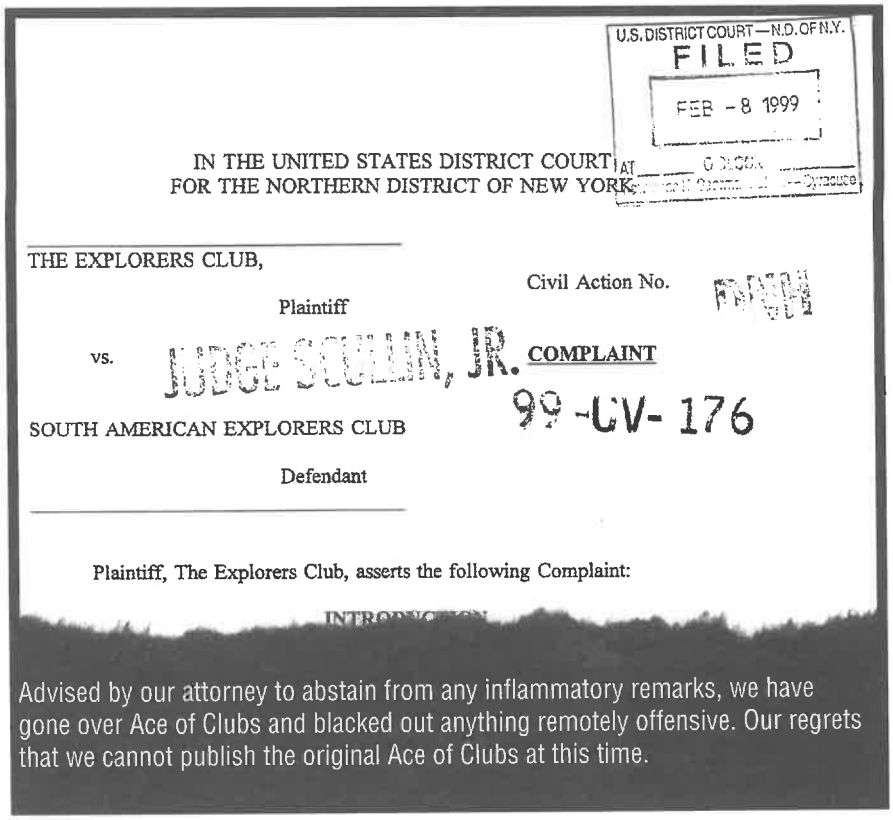
W.L. Everson

To the Editor:

Yes, I'm still recovering from the shock of finding out that I won the Bogus Book Contest (Tips and Notes, Issue 55, Spring 1999)! This means that the note I was preparing to send you, accusing the Club of favoritism, rigged contests, and outright fraud, is now bound for the shredder.

Thanks again,
Leo van Amerongen

Ace of Clubs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IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

THE EXPLORERS CLUB,

Plaintiff

vs.

SOUTH AMERICAN EXPLORERS CLUB

Defendant

Civil Action No. FINISH

JUDGE SCULLIN, JR.

99-CV-176

COMPLAINT

Plaintiff, The Explorers Club, asserts the following Complaint:

INTRODUCTION

Advised by our attorney to abstain from any inflammatory remarks, we have gone over Ace of Clubs and blacked out anything remotely offensive. Our regrets that we cannot publish the original Ace of Clubs at this time.

On March 20, 1999, at 3:46 a.m. a small sickly animal that cost $14.98 at the Pyramid Mall pet shop four years ago scraped a hollow in the wood shavings lining its cage, shuddered twice, rolled over, and died.

It's been more than a year now since Marianne brought the guinea pigs to the Club for spring break. Cricket and Penny were the much-adored mascots of the toddler class at the Ithaca Montessori School. While we answered phones and dealt with e-mails from members, Cricket, the black guinea pig, chirped cheerfully while the brown, grey, and white Penny bedded down in the wood chips.

A week after the guinea pigs' arrival, Cricket took seriously ill. The office was in chaos at the time, and only later did we pinpoint Cricket's rapid onset of sickness at 1:30 p.m.—just about the time the postman delivered a letter from [redacted] of [redacted] Mr. [redacted] is one of [redacted] This letter of [redacted] reignited an [redacted] with [redacted], a [redacted] that had been [redacted] for over [redacted] We had thought [redacted] Here again was [redacted]"

Get a letter like that on a grey and wintery day,

and it's easy to overlook the sounds of anguish coming from a rodent near the radiator. That was the day Cricket fell ill. As things turned out, she never made it back to Montessori. It wasn't all downhill. Cricket had her good periods, but these always ended with a sudden spasm, seizure, or some other convulsion that revealed her almost unbearable distress.

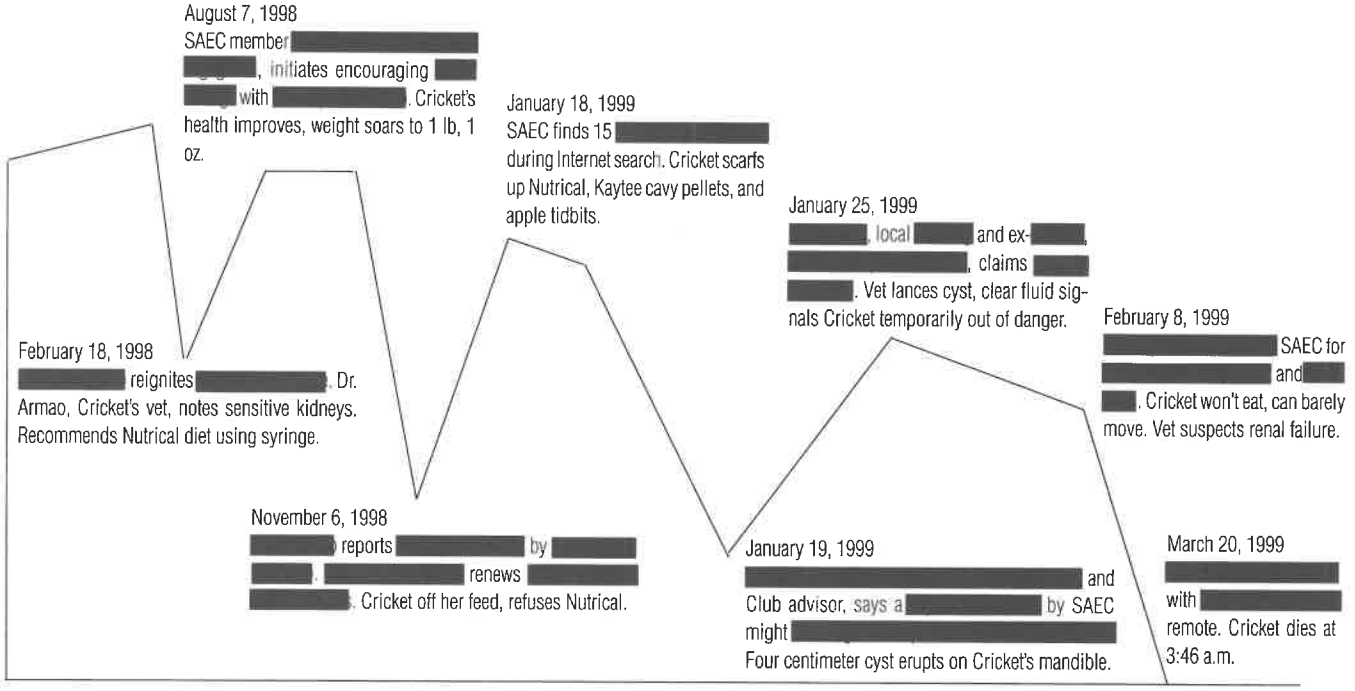
Of course, in the beginning, no one saw any sort of pattern. Cricket's condition might stabilize, hold steady for weeks on end, then something would happen, and she would fall deathly ill all over again. It's not clear who in the office first made the connection, but once made, everyone saw it: Cricket's well-being was preternaturally but unmistakably linked to [redacted]. Whenever [redacted], Club member and [redacted] who was [redacted] the SAEC [redacted], seemed on the verge of [redacted], Cricket did well. On the other hand, when [redacted] at [redacted] or [redacted] for a [redacted], Cricket suffered.

Now, as members of the South American Explorers Club know, Andean shamans use guinea pigs like Cricket to diagnose and heal their patients. As the shaman ceremoniously sweeps a guinea pig over a patient, the cuy absorbs the illness into its small, plump body. And as physicians use X-rays and MRI to analyze a patient's condition, so the shaman skins the live cuy and slits it open to study its internal organs for bruises and discolorations that tell him of injury and disease afflicting the patient. The cuy dies, but the patient is often healed.

Once the staff got attuned, all doubt was swept aside. Clearly there existed a direct correlation between Cricket's harrowing relapses and [redacted]. Cricket was our canary in the coal mine. Just look at the chart. Any way you look at it, Cricket was a living barometer that instantly registered every [redacted].

Yes, we know many will poohpooh Cricket and claim we made the whole thing up. Ridiculous. The South American Explorers Club would never hide behind a guinea pig or try to capitalize on the intense and prolonged pain of a small animal. Those that harbor any doubts on this score need only call Dr. Chris Armao at the Briar Patch Veterinary Clinic at 706 Elmira Road in Ithaca. A compassionate animal friend and year-long champion of Cricket during her travails, Chris will fill you in on and confirm the medical particulars of Cricket's drawn out struggle for survival.

Cricket's grave.


August 7, 1998
SAEC member [redacted], initiates encouraging [redacted] with [redacted]. Cricket's health improves, weight soars to 1 lb, 1 oz.
January 18, 1999
SAEC finds 15 [redacted] during Internet search. Cricket scarfs up Nutrical, Kaytee cavy pellets, and apple tidbits.
January 25, 1999
[redacted], local [redacted] and ex-[redacted], [redacted], claims [redacted]. Vet lances cyst, clear fluid signals Cricket temporarily out of danger.
February 8, 1999
[redacted] SAEC for [redacted] and [redacted]. Cricket won't eat, can barely move. Vet suspects renal failure.
February 18, 1998
[redacted] reignites [redacted]. Dr. Armao, Cricket's vet, notes sensitive kidneys. Recommends Nutrical diet using syringe.
November 6, 1998
[redacted] reports [redacted] by [redacted]. [redacted] renews [redacted]. Cricket off her feed, refuses Nutrical.
January 19, 1999
[redacted] and Club advisor, says a [redacted] by SAEC might [redacted]
Four centimeter cyst erupts on Cricket's mandible.
March 20, 1999
[redacted] with [redacted] remote. Cricket dies at 3:46 a.m.

Looking back, we are ashamed to admit that we considered deep-sixing Cricket's story. Why? Well, for one thing, [redacted] claimed that [redacted] we [redacted] when, [redacted], we [redacted] about what would happen if [redacted]—if, for example, we had to [redacted]. It was [redacted], but not to [redacted].

"My God!" we thought. "If [redacted] ballistic if we [redacted] No, we resolved. As long as Cricket lives, we must do everything in our power to spare her the guinea-pig bashing certain to rain down upon her if the story gets out.

But that was then. Given the tragic outcome, it's only fair that Cricket's story be told.

Throughout this nerve-wracking, dark, and foreboding period, all of us at the South American Explorers Club hoped against hope for an [redacted]. Time after time we thought to ourselves, "If only the [redacted] could see [redacted], surely they would [redacted]. Can't [redacted]? Let us [redacted], and we can [redacted],

[redacted] like [redacted], and get on with [redacted]."

Alas, it was not to be. Things got a whole lot worse. On February 8, 1999, [redacted]:

[redacted]

On the same day [redacted], Cricket retreated behind her wood block, burrowed into the cedar shavings, and ate no more.

Andean shamans believe that a guinea pig absorbs and mirrors the evil that afflicts the patient.

Continued on page 31.

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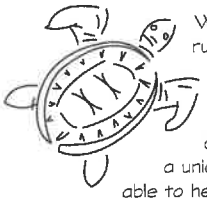

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Gustavo Toaquiza, Corpus Christi

Tigua Artists of Ecuador

Jean G. Colvin

Tigua artists in the Ecuadorian Andes are renowned for their colorful paintings of rural life. Their delightful folk art celebrates their mountain life with its festivals, legends, and traditions dating back centuries.

Tigua is a collection of small communities southwest of Quito. Most of the people here farm the mountain slopes and valleys, herding sheep and llamas and growing their crops on the patchwork of steep, windswept fields. Tigua artists are deeply bound to the land. Even the most successful painters still plant and harvest their own fields of potatoes, beans, and grains.

Traditionally, Quichua artists from the highlands decorated the drums and masks seen in the colorful Andean festivals, but the paintings that have gained popularity in recent years were unknown until the early 1970's. It was then that Julio Toaquiza, encouraged by a Quito art dealer, started to paint on a flat surface, using a sheepskin stretched over a wooden frame and brushes made from chicken feathers. It changed Tigua art dramatically. Since then, Julio's children and other villagers have developed and expanded this art form. Though lacking formal training, Tigua artists following Julio Toaquiza's lead have seen their creations spread throughout Ecuador and beyond. Tigua paintings are now widely collected, prized for their vibrancy and detail.

Today, Tigua artists still paint almost exclusively on sheep hide. Tigua paintings are invariably small, their dimensions limited by the size of the sheepskin. Many artists also paint and decorate the frames of the paintings as well. And there have been other changes. Not long

Masks by Julio Vega, Majordomo and Diablo

Alfonso Toaquiza, Los Incas

Jean Colvin is the director of the University of California Research Expeditions Program (UREP). She has worked with the Tigua Artist Cooperative since 1993, organizing exhibitions and promoting their work.

Julio Toaquiza, Matrimonio

Alfonso Toaquiza, El Mensajero

Alfredo Toaquiza, El Shaman

ago, all Tigua artists used the cheap enamel paints available everywhere in Ecuador. But since these lead-based paints were found to be toxic, those who can afford them have switched to oils or acrylics.

Tigua paintings are now widely collected, prized for their vibrancy and detail.

Tigua artists generally paint scenes of communal life: villagers herding livestock, spinning and weaving wool, harvesting crops and going to market, enjoying a bullfight. Other favorite subjects are Cotopaxi, the sacred, snow-covered volcano, Quilatoa with its rugged slopes, and the condor, the legendary bird of the Andes. Faces on rocks and mountains reflect the Tigua view that nature is alive.

For the most part, Tigua painters shy away from portraiture or abstract composition in favor of the broad perspective—village or rural scenes of multiple figures, themes of community and nature.

A popular theme with Tigua artists is the festival.

Alfredo Toaquiza, Los Incas

Gustavo Toaquiza, Contaminacion de la Amazonica

The Corpus Christi festival in Tigua

Although predominately Christian, people in Tigua still cling to ancient rituals and festivals of pre-conquest origin. Festivals portrayed most frequently in Tigua paintings are *Corpus Christi* (celebrated in June, a fiesta uniting Inca harvest festivals with medieval Christianity), *Noche Buena* (Christmas Eve), and *Tres Reyes* (Three Kings). And since music is inseparable from the festival, Tigua painting typically pays homage to musicians and their instruments—guitar, flute, panpipe, drum, and trumpet. Dancers, too, are a favorite. Swaying and weaving to the hauntingly beautiful music, brightly costumed performers in ornately carved masks of the tiger, monkey, and dog dance through the narrow streets.

In times of trouble or ill health, the highland Quichua look to their shaman to perform the traditional cleaning and healing rituals. The skulls, candles, smoke, and medicinal plants that shamans use in their ceremonies figure prominently in Tigua art. Paintings of shamans tend to be somewhat somber and dark, as shamans usually practice their rites at night.

Historical and political themes are not common in Tigua paintings. Though the Incas spent little time in Ecuador, Inca rulers and deities do figure in paintings. Another historical theme is the *hacienda* period. In these paintings, indigenous people are seen working as serfs on large estates under the stern gaze of a majordomo.

Today, sophisticated Tigua artists are politically active. It's not uncommon to find paintings of Quichuas celebrating the election of Ecuador's first Indian representative to the national congress, marchers demonstrating for indigenous rights, and scenes of environmental destruction wrought by international oil companies operating in the Amazon basin. *Pachacama*, protector of the earth and the principle Inca deity, is often portrayed as a disembodied visage in the background of the painting, a symbol of Indian ethnic and cultural pride.

Maria Toaquiza, Alfredo's wife and one of the few women artists of Tigua

The growing popularity of Tigua-style art has spawned a whole new crop of painters, some native Tiguans, but many found in other parts of Ecuador. The quality varies dramatically. The better painters sell their work through tourist stores or galleries. Less-well-known artists peddle their paintings themselves. You'll see them at the weekend fairs and on the streets of Quito and other towns where tourists gather. Not a few Tigua artists have cut their rural roots and embraced urban life with its abundance of tourists and other buyers. These artists, who still paint bucolic scenes of village life, are frowned upon by artists living with their families in the country. They feel theirs is the true Tigua art, an art that expresses their ties to the land. They prefer to sell their art, not through galleries or dealers, but directly to the art aficionado.

Tigua religion still clings to its ancient rituals and festivals of pre-conquest origin.

Tigua painters were once viewed as artisans; their work mere handicrafts. In recent years, Tigua art has been exhibited at the Organization of American States in Washington DC, the University of California Hearst Museum, the Museum of Man in San Diego, California, and the UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

With each exhibit, the appreciation of Tigua paintings grows, and the artists who create these delightful works are at last receiving the recognition they deserve.

Julio Toaquiza, Los Amazonicos a la Asemblea

Tigua Art

Where to Go

Though quality varies widely, you'll find Tigua paintings in tourist stores throughout Quito, at the weekend fair in Parque Elejido opposite the Colon Hotel, on the streets of Quito, and at markets in Otavalo (Wednesday and Saturday), Saquisili (Thursday), and Pujili (Sunday).

The highest quality paintings are found in Tigua-Chimbacucho, the birthplace of Tigua art. Here, artists have formed a cooperative with a gallery to sell their paintings, masks, and other creations. You can visit their community 54 km west of Latacunga on the Latacunga-Quevedo road (about 10 km before the town of Zumbahua). Look for a large sign in Spanish and English on the right side of the road. The gallery—a white building with red-framed windows—is 50 yards or so up the hill on the left. Ask for Alfredo Toaquiza, the president of the cooperative.

Signpost to the gallery of the Tigua Artist Cooperative

You can also buy Tigua paintings near Quilatoa Crater (about 30 minutes by car from the town of Zumbahua) and in other small communities along the Latacunga-Quevedo road.

Traveling by bus? You can reach Tigua from Latacunga. Ask the driver to let you off at Tigua-Chimbacucho. Safari Tours, a company based in Quito, will take small groups to the region. Safari can arrange day tours, or you can include Tigua as part of a longer tour.

If you're planning to stay overnight, be advised that lodging around Tigua is sparse. There are several modest hostals in Zumbahua. Closer to Quilatoa is the new Quilatoa Lodge with small rustic cabins near the community of Macapungo. Humberto Latacunga operates a *very* basic "lodge" near the Quilatoa crater. For $5 a night, you get a room and simple local fare. The popular Black Sheep Inn, about one to two hours by rough road beyond Zumbahua, is a small, pleasant lodge. It is operated by an American couple. The rooms are small but comfortable, the food American-style.

Jean Colvin leads small groups to Ecuador each year to visit Tigua and Capirona, a community in Ecuador's rainforest that runs an ecotourist program. Contact: The University of California Research Expeditions Program (UREP) at 530-752-0692; email: urep@ucdavis.edu; web site: http://urep.ucdavis.edu.

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The Correlejas

Running of the Bulls in Colombia

The temporary arena of Sincelejo, Colombia, jerry-built of poles and rough-cut lumber.

If you get into a large ring with a crowd of drunks, galloping horses, and a pissed-off bull, someone's going to get hurt.

Most who take part work with cattle, but anyone can jump into the ring and play matador.

Nearly a dozen bands blared strains of the local fandango while revelers danced in the blood-soaked sand.

Robert Mykle

It's January, the dry season, and you're in the tropics. It gets very hot. You'll need one of these elaborately woven straw hats to protect you from the sun.

The Corralejas, a madcap combination of a Spanish bullfight, the running of the bulls in Pamplona, a Roman circus, and a rodeo.

Horsemen, dressed in their finery, ride their mounts along a seven-mile route through the city streets.

In this arena the bulls leave alive. Unfortunately, the same cannot always be said of the human participants.

Like an apparition, the world's largest bullring rises in the provincial capital of Sincelejo on the north coast of Colombia. Jerry-built of poles and rough-cut lumber, the temporary arena of Sincelejo hosts one of South America's best-kept secrets—the Corralejas, a madcap combination of a Spanish bullfight, the running of the bulls in Pamplona, a Roman circus, and a rodeo. In this arena the bulls leave alive. Unfortunately, the same cannot always be said of the human participants.

A week-long celebration by the people of Colombia's north coast

The Corralejas are part of a week-long celebration by the people of Colombia's north coast. A parade kicks off the festivities on a Monday. Troops of local girls in traditional colorful full-skirted dresses dance the fandango. A large *cabalgata* follows—thousands of horsemen, dressed in their finery, sporting black-and-white straw hats, ride their mounts along a seven-mile route through the city streets. The *cabalgata* is a moveable feast with families and friends astride the famous paso-fino horses. Tomorrow many of these same horses and riders will face the bulls in the Corralejas as garacherros or picadors.

The next day the Corralejas begin. The rustic coliseum looms improbably atop a dusty knoll as long lines jostle into the stadium. As the spectators fill the stands, the hopeful matadors mill about in the arena below, joking and drinking. If

Horses gallop at full speed, chasing charging bulls that bound through the crowds.

they're lucky, they might get to make a few good passes in the ring. If not, they may wind up with nasty, sometimes fatal, wounds. A few come with red capes. Most however make do with whatever is at hand—undershirts, towels, even bits of paper. Clown and animal costumes lend a touch of Carnival to the festivities. Some hold colorful umbrellas to ward off the tropical sun, sometimes turning them into absurd, impromptu fighting capes.

"This is Pamplona before Hemingway"

Over the next five days, a biblical forty bulls, donated by local ranchers, are released into the coliseum. After the amateur bullfighters have their sport, a bull will be "picked" by mounted garracheros. Neither horse nor rider has any protection; the bull's horns are not filed down or tampered with. In a tense, exciting spectacle horses gallop at full speed, chasing charging bulls that bound through the crowds.

"This is Pamplona before Hemingway," yells Mike McDonner, the only other foreigner down among the bulls. "I love all this craziness."

"The Corralejas weren't any good last year, either," he lamented. "No one died!"

At my first Corralejas, twenty years ago, three horsemen chased a bull up behind me. I remember a crescendo of screams, a dark blur, the clatter of hooves. I came to lying on the ground, spitting out sand. Brushing myself off, I limped back to the festivities. Both my camera and I survived, and a friendly neighbor boosted my spirits with a swig from his bottle. A few gulps of rum, and my leg felt fine. Like other casualties, I returned to the fray.

Hundreds died, crushed to death in a disaster that for years sounded the death knell for the Corralejas.

After the excitement of the picadors, bull-baiting, injuries, and danger, the bulls were roped and escorted from the arena exhausted, bloodied, but alive. Nobody was seriously hurt, much to the disappointment of one spectator. "The Corralejas weren't any good last year, either," he lamented. "No one died!"

Unlike the elaborate sacrificial dance of death performed in Spain and the major bullrings of Latin America, the Corralejas melee is a free-for-all jubilee. Most who take part work with cattle, but anyone is free to jump into the ring and play matador. Read Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon* if you're interested in bullfighting. It helps to understand the ceremony of the fight and the ritual sacrifice of the venerated bull even in the chaos of the Corralejas.

This is cattle country. Here at the Corralejas, as in rodeos up north, you marvel at the range of skills of those who work with cattle. Other towns celebrate their own Corralejas, but Sincelejo's is the most famous. It is celebrated on the 20th of January, and dates back 150 years, although bull-baiting has been common along the Colombian Caribbean coast since colonial times.

But in 1980, tragedy struck. "Death in the afternoon" took on new meaning. On that day, thousands seeking shelter from a thunderstorm crowded into the flimsily built stands, some rising five stories high. When the stadium collapsed, hundreds died, crushed to death in a disaster that for years sounded the death knell for the Corralejas.

Only last year did the Sincelejo Corralejas spring back to life. Great care went into making it safe. In the words of Alvaro Alcocer, President of the Corralejas Festival Committee, "We have built a better, stronger stadium, with better security. This time, there will be no overcrowding." Still...as my companion Mario Meja says, "Let's face it. If you get into a large ring with a crowd of drunks, galloping horses, and a pissed-off bull, someone's going to get hurt."

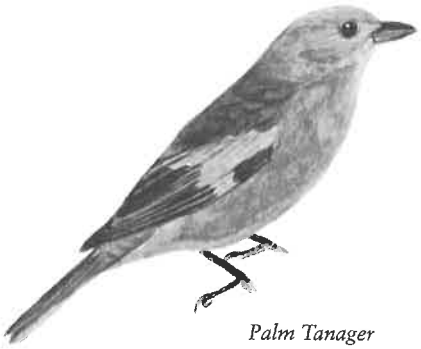
At that moment, as if on cue, a large brown bull charges his tormentors, tossing one over his head. A collective gasp goes up from the crowd as he crumples to the ground. He lies there, motionless, blood flowing from his gouged head. Then slowly, dazed, his face covered in blood, he sits up. A friend pours white rum on his wound—straight from the bottle. Gamely, unsteadily, he at last staggers to his feet and heads back to the action.

The hours pass on this hot afternoon. With every gulp of *Tres Esquinas*, the fiery local white rum, or anise-flavored aguardiente, the matadors grow more brazen. A good thing, too—they've saved the "better," fiercer bulls for late in the day.

With Alvaro Alcocer, I watch the bulls charge from the stocks into the milling crowd. "Are these good bulls?" I ask. "Good? Yes. But tomorrow—the best," he smiles. "Tomorrow, *my* bulls—bulls from *my* ranch."

The Corralejas knows no class. Señor Alcocer, president of the festi-

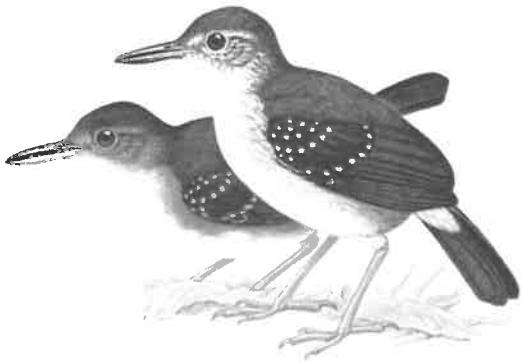
Continued on page 30.



Palm Tanager

Pompadour Cotinga

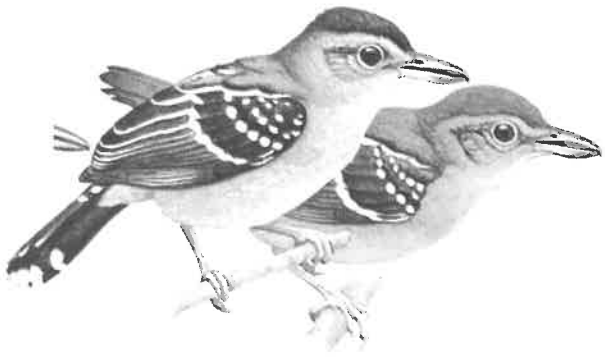
We're in the circle now!
Hurray, it's countable!



Silvered Antbird

Bat Falcon

Rufescent Tiger-Heron



Slaty Antshrikes

Velvet-fronted Grackle

Winging it in Guyana

Richard Ryan
Illustrations by Guy Tudor

Just so you know, bird watching is to birding what commuting to work by car is to stockcar-racing.

The first Christmas bird count approved by the National Audubon Society took place almost a hundred years ago. Since then, the Society publishes the results of annual Christmas bird-counts in its magazine.

Setting up your own Christmas bird count isn't all that tricky, at least if you're counting your birds in the United States or Canada. You might even pull it off in northern Mexico without too much hassle. All you'd have to do is pick a new birding area, i.e. one not already covered by another count, get approval from the National Audubon Society, and commit to holding the count every year. That's what they mean by "annual."

If this is all it takes, I think, it should be no big deal to set up a count in South America, but it turns out it's not that simple. It took me an entire year of letter-writing, organizing, planning, even begging and pleading, to bring it off.

To start at the beginning: For most of the 1980's, I was leading birding trips to Trinidad/Tobago for Wonder Bird Tours. While there I heard Winston Nanaan, a local bird guide, raving about the birding in Guyana. I was thinking about starting my own business at the time and was looking for some new birding destinations. I proposed to Winston that we join forces and start a company offering birding tours to Guyana. "I'll think it over," he said. I wrote him a couple of letters after that but never heard from him again.

Some time later, I was chatting up a fellow I'd gotten to know while leading birding trips in Trinidad. He showed me a video promoting fishing trips to Guyana, and looking at the background scenery in the video, I knew it had to be a great place for birding.

I took along two friends on my first trip to Guyana: Art Panzer, a New Jersey dentist/ace bird photograper, and Joe Zygala, an avid birder who'd taken several trips with me. I wanted their opinion.

Bird watching is to birding what commuting to work by car is to stockcar-racing.

The first hitch came the day before our flight to Guyana. We discovered we needed visas. We hurried over to the Guyana consulate in Port-o-Spain, a small insurance office staffed by a solitary young woman. "Did you bring photos?" she asked. We hadn't. "That's all right," she responded cheerfully. "If you have photos the visa is $5; if you don't, it's $20." All this sounded rather suspicious, but with no options, we forked over the $20 each.

When we arrived in Guyana the following day, an immigration officer confirmed my suspicions. "There is no such thing as a $20 no-photo visa," he said. He then compared our mugs to the pictures in our passports, apparently saw a similarity, and waved us through.

Outside the airport, three dozen taxi drivers besieged us, a furious scene of raucous desperation that unnerved my two companions. Expecting to meet Alpha, my contact, I brushed them off. When Alpha failed to appear, I went to the BWIA where office where he worked, but in vain. Alpha, I was told, wasn't in Guyana. "If he were," a woman assured me, "We would most certainly know it." I told Joe and Art the bad news. Unfortunately, I had been relying on Alpha for everything—to find a hotel, come up with an itinerary, and line up transportation. Still, for myself, I wasn't all that worried. Let's wing it, I suggested to Joe and Art, but no way—both wanted out. Outvoted, I booked us on the 8 p.m. flight back to Trinidad. This left us with seven-plus hours to kill.

With tickets in hand, Joe and Art calmed down, and we agreed to do some birding until sunset. I struck a deal

Richard Ryan has been birding the American tropics since 1951 and has been leading birding tours since 1981. He has written for American Birds, Birding, *and* Winging It.

with Hussein, a cab driver. (This was during the Gulf War, and Hussein was reluctant to reveal his name lest he lose fares.) He would be happy to take us anywhere, he said, but wanted us to know he knew nothing about birds or where to find them. I remembered a road that led to one of the bauxite mines. "What about that?" I said. Hussein pointed to his bald tires. He doubted they could survive the road, which was badly chewed up from the ore trucks. "No matter, Hussein," I said. "Can you find some trees? You find the trees, and I'll find the birds."

Soon, we were bouncing and bumping out of the airport and into the countryside. We hadn't gone more than a kilometer or two when I spotted a sand road and tapped Hussein on the shoulder. "There?" he asked in great surprise. "There," said I with conviction. Hussein swung his vehicle 150 yards down the road. "Stop here!" I shouted. He shrugged and stopped.

It turned out we had hit upon a great birding location, a spot I have returned to many times since. At first Art and Joe hung back, fearful of venturing far from the taxi. But as I explored the area, and reported seeing a host of great birds, Joe's enthusiasm grew and got the better of his caution. He joined in. Even Art loosened up a bit when two smartly dressed schoolgirls strolled by and greeted him with a polite, "Good afternoon, sir."

On a hot, sunny, tropical afternoon, in those few hours before we had to race off to the airport, we sighted some 56 species. Not at all bad for what was, after all, a mostly scrubby forest. I was very impressed, especially since we never strayed further than 8 km or so from the international airport. Overjoyed, I was all for canceling our plane reservations and doing some serious birding. Joe agreed, but Art, alas, would have none of it. In the end we all returned to Trinidad that night.

For me, that first little jaunt to Guyana was all it took. I decided then and there to set up a tour, but I needed a good contact. When my travel agent came up with a list of twelve travel agents in Guyana, I immediately sat down and wrote every one. Of the dozen, only one replied, and all he had to say was that he wasn't interested. On the other hand, he did suggest I contact Tony Thorne in Georgetown. Weary and somewhat disheartened, I dispatched a letter to Tony and was not a little surprised to get a call from him two weeks later. Even better, he came through with a invitation to visit Guyana and scout out birding sites.

On that memorable trip, I counted 186 species in two days. Tony and I immediately put together a tour which we still offer nine years later.

Ned holds forth on the different plumage of the Greater and Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture.

During one such tour, it dawned on me that one of the lodges would make the perfect hub for a Christmas bird count. But how set up a bird count in Guyana? Birders are not likely to travel thousands of miles to take part in an untried count. To pull it off, I needed bait, something to lure them in. And what better bait than a super bargain? Eventually, I convinced several hotels, lodges, and outfitters to cut us a deal. I explained that the results of the bird count would be published in *Audubon*, an international bird magazine with a circulation of 25,000. In the end, a couple offered major discounts, others agreed to extend their services *gratis*.

I was sure I'd pulled it off...but that wasn't quite the case. You wouldn't believe all the Guyanese that live in Canada and the United States who fly back to Guyana around Christmas. So many fly that Guyana Airlines is booked solid during this high season and not particularly interested in handing out free or discounted tickets. "Couldn't you hold your Christmas count or whatever some other time?" they wanted to know. Well, no, I couldn't, of course. It's a Christmas count and has to be done the two weeks around Christmas—National Audubon Society rules. All things considered, it's a rather reasonable rule.

I called up Geoff LeBaron, editor of *Audubon*. I needed his approval to launch an official count. Of course, he wanted some guarantee that the Guyana count would be an annual event. He gave his blessing when I pointed out that I had a vested interest in it becoming just that.

With everything taken care of except getting a discount on the flight, I started calling potential birders. I was looking for birders familiar with Guyana. Even without promising a cheap flight, I managed to round up five birders: Ned Boyajian, a veteran of tropical American birding; his son Ned; Glenn and Eileen Mahler who had already birded Guyana; and Joe Zygala from my disastrous first Guyana trip.

I decided to stop recruiting at this point when, with just two weeks to go, Guyana Airlines came up with four tickets discounted 50 percent below their lowest fare plus two more at their rock-bottom fare. Not bad.

Before I got to bask in the gratifying glow of my organizational wizardry, the U.S. State Department issued an advisory warning Americans not to travel to Guyana. A crowd displeased with the election returns ri-

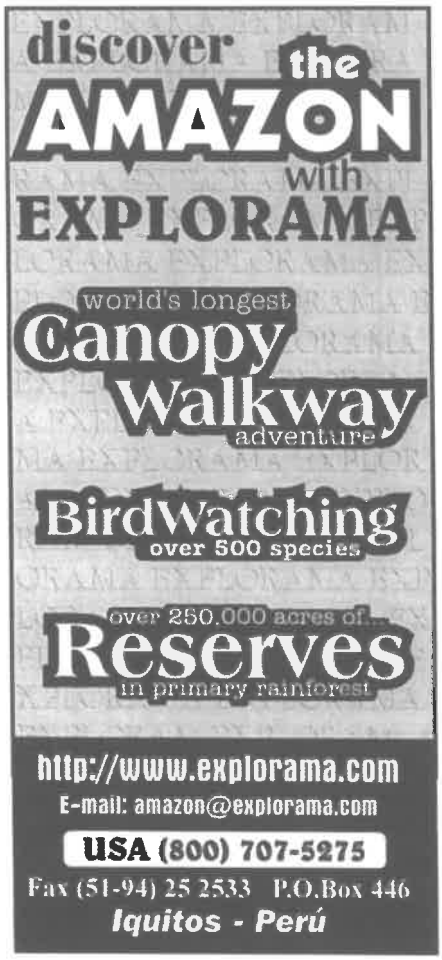
oted in Georgetown. The police responded with gunfire. Hours before our scheduled take-off, I called friends in Guyana. Yes, there had been a riot, they said, but all other protests since then had been peaceful. Reassured, I called my birders. One and all stood ready to go.

Hitch two was less serious: a nine-hour delay of our flight to Guyana. We'd have to scratch plans to catch a boat to Timberhead Lodge the day we arrive. The worst drought in forty years gripped Guyana. River levels sank, exposing sunken tree roots and other snags. A boat trip to the lodge in the dark was out of the question. So much for having a full day to scout the territory before the count. We'd be lucky to end up with a few hours.

Birds everywhere, so many birds, so many varieties!

The rules governing Christmas counts are very specific. The area covered by a count has to be a circle fifteen miles in diameter. For a bird to make the count day checklist, it must be sighted inside the circle within a 24-hour day during a specific two-week period. Count day isn't until tomorrow, but there's another count category as well. Birds seen three days before and after count day can be counted as "seen during count week." Suddenly, Glenn points to a Bat Falcon gliding over a field of sugar cane. Damn! It's not countable—we haven't quite reached the count circle. A few minutes later, a King Vulture soars overhead. Happily, we've arrived in the circle! Hurray, it's countable!

And so we boat up the Demerara and into Mazumi Creek. The birding is getting marvelous. A Rufescent Tiger Heron flaps lazily overhead, the first of that species I've seen in this area. We head up the creek while the elder Ned holds forth on the different plumage of the Greater and Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture. Actually, they're almost the same size; the difference is barely detectable in the field. I keep quiet. I'm not about to admit I make my identification the lazy way. The Greater Yellow-headed Vulture is almost always spotted flying over forest while the Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture is invariably glimpsed over open country. That's good enough for me; I don't need binoculars to tell which is which.



We're forced to do our pre-count day scouting during the afternoon—the worst time of day. Elder Ned tramps off into the denser forest while I lead the rest of the group through the open woods along the swamp trail. Back home, we talked a lot about proper foot gear for the swamp, but the drought has changed everything. The swamp is just about dead dry. Marsh grass that normally thrives in water four to ten inches deep is growing along the banks above the waterline. Water birds are few—a bad omen.

A male Pompadour Cotinga sweeps overhead—a great coup

Only an occasional bird call sounds in the heat of the afternoon. Suddenly sex triumphs over the sweltering heat—a lek of McConnell's Flycatchers breaks into song. A lek is any place where several males of one species gather to call and dance about. The show is put on to attract females. Soon, the forest echoes with the music of a flock of Ferruginous-backed Antbirds hidden in the dense undergrowth. It's then that Eileen steps back, surprised by a sizeable and rather agitated snake writhing near the trail. "A False Cobra—quite harmless," I pronounce with authority. The large mouse clamped in the snake's jaws might not agree with the "harmless" bit.

We devise a birding strategy for count day. Well before dawn, Joe and I will set out in a small boat. Piloted by Junior, the area's ace boatman, we will hopefully make it through the countless snags in the creek and reach the far side of the Demerara by dawn. Joe will bird an extensive flower farm while I head to the airport area to

bird the section of the Linden savannah within our circle. Later, Joe and I will meet up to count the open country birds near Santa Mission. Ned and Ned will bird the heavy forest and canoe up Pokerero Creek. They'll return later in time to count the night birds. Glenn and Eileen will do the swamp trail.

My travel alarm goes off in the early hours. Count day! Joe and I stagger out of bed, shower, wolf down a quick breakfast, and stumble off to the boat. A Tropical Screech Owl screeches nearby, followed by the unmistakable call of the Great Horned Owl. A Blackish Nightjar swoops across our path. Down the creek we glide, our boatman veering around the snags. The shrill sputter of a Semicollared Nighthawk shatters the stillness. Then the deep hoot of another Great Horned Owl. Reaching the Demerara, we angle across the current at full throttle.

My spirits lift briefly when we come across a flock of Velvet-fronted Grackles

We drop Joe off at the flower farm, and I'm off to the woods by the airport and the Linden savannah. Birds everywhere, so many birds, so many varieties! Walking along, I joyously spot more and more birds. But swept up in my ornithological euphoria, I forget how easy it is to lose your way in the savannah. Wasn't that, after all, why I decided to bird this area myself? I gaze around. "Where am I? Oh, sh...I'm lost!"

In all we'd seen/heard some 4500 individual birds

I check the sun's position and look at my compass. (Of course, I forgot to take a reading before I left the van.) The Demerara is due west. Also, I've been looking away from the sun at the birds on my right. This means the van must be north. I head off in that direction and soon spot some rotting posts that look familiar. After stumbling around for fifteen minutes, I'm relieved to find the van. Later, while recounting my adventures, I omit this little embarrassment.

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Just then, a male Pompadour Cotinga sweeps overhead—a great coup. While not all that rare, the Pompadour Cotinga is a bird with pizzaz. Roughly the size of a small pigeon, it's rather striking with brilliant plum-purple plumage and large snow white patches on its wings. I suspect that my companions in the forest have seen Pompadour Cotingas of their own, but, still, it's a nifty find. Less classy but far more rare (hereabouts at least) is a small brownish flycatcher. The tiny bill and head topped in red-brown plumage identifies this as a Rufous-capped Elaenia.

The day is going splendidly. While pursuing the notes of a strange, muted song, I stumble upon a scattering of Yellow-green Grosbeaks—an unexpected find in the savannah woods. Nearby, I hear the call of the Northern Slaty Antstrike, a sound so distinctive I don't even bother to look for it but just simply check it off. No one else is likely to snag a Northern Slaty Antstrike today.

Every area has its own unique bird population, and this is my dilemma. Right now, the birding is exceptionally good here. I can stay with this delightful batch of birds and make the most of this wondrous opportunity. On the other hand, if I stay, I'll most certainly miss seeing new, yet-uncounted species that live elsewhere. In the end, I decide to stick to the original plan and move on.

I stop at a bridge spanning a stream where workmen are making rather noisy repairs. After twenty or so unproductive minutes here, I'm about to push on when I hear the song of an antbird in the underbrush along the creek. It's a familiar call, but I can't immediately connect it to the bird. Luckily, it briefly (very briefly) hops out from the tangles, and I recognize the plain gray body streaked silvery white on the underside, the markings of the Silvered Antbird, another species unlikely to be seen by anyone else.

Odd that, with all the birds I've checked off, I've not encountered any of the small seed-eating species (Grassquits, Seedeaters, Grassfinch, Grassland Sparrow). I expect their numbers will pick up now that I've reached open country. But no such luck. I spot hardly any.

When I get back to the flower farm, I find a weary Joe. "This place is bigger than I remember," he says. Together we bird the woods and fields around Santa Mission, spotting lots of common birds, but few of the

specialties, e.g. Swallow-tailed Kites. I'm disappointed, but Joe, possibly because he's hot and tired, doesn't seem to care. My spirits lift briefly when we come across a flock of Velvet-fronted Grackles in a marsh near the village. The Velvet-fronted Grackle is a very localized species, hence a fine prize on our list.

Back at the lodge, we all keep mum about what the birds we've seen until the time comes to tally up. There's always friendly competition to "bag" a species not seen by the others. This can happen quite often in tropical bird counts where there are many, many species, but only one or two individuals of a species show up to be counted on count day.

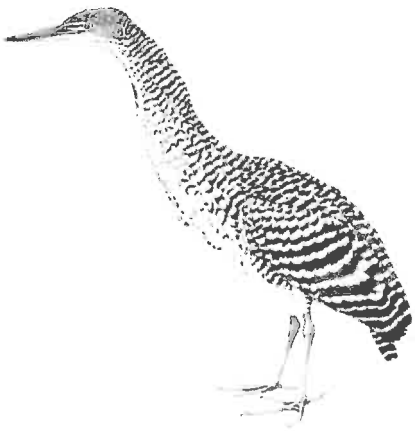
As I read from the list of Guyana birds, whoever has seen that particular bird pipes up to say how many individuals. Joe, with his handy-dandy portable computer, keeps the records. This is when I discover why Joe was so blase about not seeing the Swallow-tailed Kite at Santa Mission—he'd already scored a Swallow-tailed Kite earlier at the flower farm. Still, my Pompadour Cotinga turns out to be the only one seen today.

For our first count, I'd hoped we'd see 200 to 210 species, but our grand total is a whopping 251 species—a happy surprise. In all we'd seen/heard some 4500 individual birds (of these, 1000 were Palm & Blue-gray Tanagers)—a remarkable number, especially for an area with no coast and hardly any variation in altitude.

I'm hoping the 1999 Christmas bird count will be our best yet.

On New Year's Day, Glenn, Eileen and I plan a boat trip into the Lamaha Water Conservancy, a vast swamp crisscrossed by streams that supplies most of the water for Georgetown. It's a new area for me, and I have trouble finding a way in. To make matters worse, I discover that a quarter mile of the conservancy is within our count circle! Had we but known this, our grand total bird count would have been even higher, given the number of water birds we see in spite of the drought. Nonetheless, we include them in count week, and it provides us all with some consolation to log in thirty-seven species not seen on count day.

Knowing what we know now and with some more people, future counts might top 290 or more. This figure compares favorably with other South American counts. In fact, the 290 Guyana count is only second to Peru's all-time Christmas count record. I'm hoping the 1999 Christmas bird count will be our best yet.



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Nutcase Chronicles

Part II

Georgia Lee

Easter Island has been a choice target for many of the rationally-challenged. Part I of the Nutcase Chronicles provided examples of bizarre theories espoused by enthusiastic folks, just enough off-center to bring the reader up short. The examples cited are actual letters and publications that have been fermenting in my Lunatic Fringe File for many years.

Issue 55 of the South American Explorer included theories of elephant power, space travelers, "thermal lances," and laser beams. Part II includes Lost Continents (Mu and Lemeria), mega-diffusionist theories, and that bane of archaeologists everywhere, Erich von Däniken.

the islands of Polynesia are not, nor have they ever been, part of a sunken continent

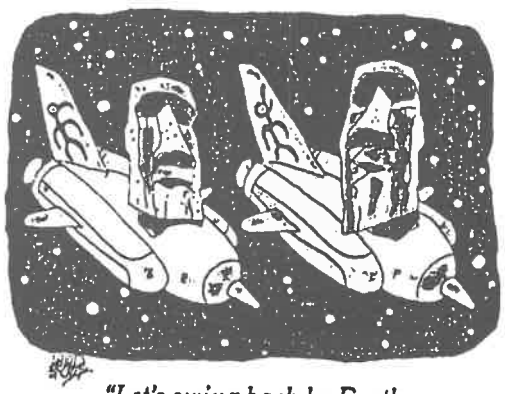
The Sunken Continent Crowd

Many wild scenarios begin with the theory of a sunken continent. Read my lips, people: the islands of Polynesia are not, nor have they ever been, part of a sunken continent. They are tips of volcanic peaks. Many years ago, before exploration and mapping of the sea floor, it was thought by some that the islands of the great Pacific ocean were part of a former continent. However, now that the ocean floor has been studied and mapped, we have clear and irrefutable evidence that no such continent ever existed. Nevertheless, the vision dies hard.

As recently as 1989, a review in *The Washington Times* described an upcoming book by one Charles Berlitz which "will examine Easter Island as a relic of a lost continent." Berlitz is quoted as saying that there are:

. . . many prehistoric remnants in the South Pacific . . . monstrous buildings on small islands. One explanation is that these were shrines atop mountains and the cities are submerged. About 11,000 years ago most of the land mass around these islands was above water.

Mr. Berlitz also authored *The Bermuda Triangle*, *Mysteries from Forgotten Worlds*, *Doomsday 1999 A.D.*, and *Atlantis the VIII Continent*, and is quoted as saying that if one pierced the earth with an arrow at the center of the Bermuda Triangle, it would emerge in the Pacific. [This statement is a real no-brainer. No one is going to put an arrow to the test.]



"Let's swing back by Earth. It's been ages since we colonized it."

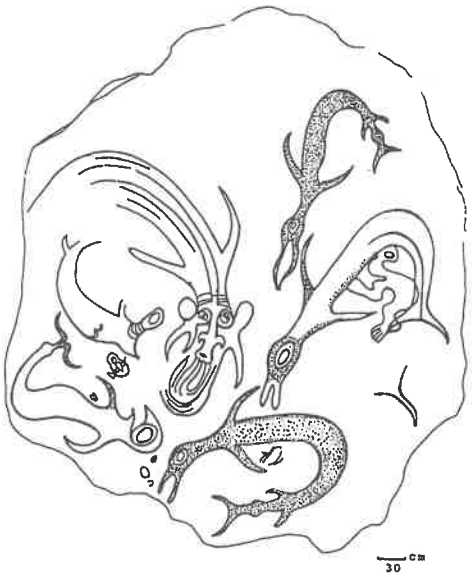
Lemuria and Mu, or Things That Go Bump in the Dark

The location of Mu and Atlantis, according to James Churchward. This version shows Mu out in the middle of the Pacific, not encompassing Los Angeles, as some have suggested.

Along with the sunken continent idea comes the Lemuria and Mu contingent. Those folks who believe or wish to believe in some ancient supernatural power and in a mystical race endowed with mystical abilities and knowledge, often point to Mu, Lemuria or Atlantis as the places from whence far-wiser beings came, and who may still be lurking amongst us. Various writers have ascribed different locations for that region, diverse attributes, and superhuman capabilities to the peoples that supposedly inhabited them.

To provide some background on Lemuria, read the following excerpt from *Would You Believe?, The Controversial Phenomena Magazine*, No. 32, for Spring, 1990:

Mu is another name for Lemuria, called Motherland by the Atlantians. This sprawling continent is said to have stretched from Indo China to the Americas. Its most remarkable feature was a dense perpetual cloud cover that generated perpetual rain and spawned myriads [sic] *of wildlife species including huge predator lizards that forced the Lemurians to erect cities and temples high on mountain tops and in subterranean caves.* [Maybe the Lemurian predator lizards were the source for Godzilla or Jurassic Park—does Spielberg read this stuff?]



The petroglyph at Hau Koka, Rano Kau

As a 200,000 year old civilization, they were highly psychic and got by without a formal spoken or written language (there were even older civilizations than this: some going back a half million years such as the Yuga pre-Tibetian society of 180 million, destroyed by a three-day cataclysm).

The Lemurian successors on Easter Island erected the stone images and those of the Indus Valley and used identical human figure heiroglyphics [sic].

After centuries things started to fall apart. The elites had developed computer-like intellects, titanic Firestone-powered maser beams, lasers, synthetic atom-core supermetals, beam-riding Arrow Ships; synthetic genetics and chromosone [sic] *manipulations and other technologies including that of anti-gravity.*

In desperation to stamp out the predators, they attempted to dry up the rain forests and then catostrophic [sic] *global consequences occurred. Great floods, earthquakes and so on caused the sinking of Mu. This produced moment-arm* [huh?], *earth-spin unbalance and a cataclysmic axis shift. In the winter of 9,654 B.C. a Firestone power system's main "raw solar power" channel ruptured destroying the culture.*

The Lemurians who found refuge in the subterranean regions got together with the Atlatian refugees and after 12,000 years of development, these subterraneans [sic] *now possess the power to operate the atom-core alloy hull UFOs which exist and enter undersea "gateways" via anti-gravity fields. Sunken pyramids at the bottom of the seas also contribute to this effect.*

Many proponents of the lost civilization of Lemuria [or Lemeura—It is a fact that these people really cannot spell] focus a lot on Easter Island, and the details vary from time to time. The lost Lemurians, according to one source, were groups of clairvoyant seers, oracles, and holy people who interacted between other worlds. Today the remains of this "lost paradise" include the Fiji Islands, Hawaii, Easter Island, and ". . . some of the Los Angeles area—and that is why many spiritual people who have a high consciousness are drawn there." [More likely, one might suggest that is why there is a large percentage of strange people in L.A.]. The Lemurian P.R. goes on to say that when Lemuria was destroyed, the people became Tibetans, Eskimos, Mayans and Native Americans and these people today are "sacred record keepers."

The above proponents of Lemuria put a curious spin on the statues of Easter Island. They state the features of the Easter Island monuments are similar to black African features and that one statue at Rano Raraku that is shown with knees "proves that there was a migration from South America because the exact same statue is in a plaza in Brazil." [Not being familiar with Brazilian statuary, it is hard to comment on this one, but if any of *South American Explorer* readers have seen this figure, we'd love to look at a photo!]

This Negroid idea is often expanded upon. It seems that the gods brought Negroid people (who became the Olmecs!) from Mexico to Tiahuanaco to be slaves sometime around 4,000 BC, and one group was exiled to Easter Island. The reason statue making ceased is that these people were "rescued" from Easter Island. But it gets better:

The almost total invisibility of this Negroid culture in the Americas presents a fascinating parallel to the Biblical tale of Nimrod, the mighty Negroid rebel . . . and

archaeologists have been mystified at the lack of direct evidence for Nimrod's presence in these lands.

[No Negroid traces have been detected on Easter Island in either facial features, bone or DNA studies. The statues of Easter Island do not have black African features. I don't know of any archaeologist who has given a thought to Nimrod's lack of presence in Mexico, let alone been mystified. The proponents of Lemuria also believe that there is "little doubt" that the mysterious culture of Easter Island had an advanced form of air travel at its disposal. I think that if the Easter Islanders had had air travel available in ancient times, they would have left when things got tough.]

The Matuans

The Matuans seem to be an offshoot of the Lemuria/Atlantis coterie and are said to be linked to Easter Island as well as Hawaii and Tahiti. Their history, they say, begins with the sinking of Hiva, a land that will someday rise again and then its god, Tulu, will reclaim the world.

This scenario came from a (now defunct) web page:

In preparation for that great day, the god sent Aku-aku (guardian spirits) to Easter Island in order to erect statues which they placed around the island and which were connected to the volcanic center [sic] *by magic power. When Hiva reappears, the statues will send energy along "roads" to Rano Kao* [sic] *where the Aku-aku placed a monolith of "unearthly material" that held aloft a statue of Tulu.*

The story now shifts to Peru where we find a high priest, Hotu Matua. He was found conversing with the "sea dwellers who worshiped Tulu" so he and his people were exiled into the sea. They were guided to Easter Island by the Aku-aku. The fantasy goes on, finally coming to the statues carved in the crater, which "walked clockwise around the island until they arrived at their appointed stop." Then we hear about the Long-ears and the Short-ears, the birdman contest, Maké-Maké, and Tangata Manu (birdman), and finally it turns out that the Tangata Manu is given power in the form of a Crystal that sent forth beams of energy to destroy all in its path. After a series of other events, the Crystal was placed in an underwater tunnel dug beneath the sacred isle of Motu Nui.

The Matuans were created by a Tangata Manu and became a secret society to preserve the old ways and to hide the secrets of the past, including Rongo-rongo tablets [written in the language of the Aku-aku, naturally]. *Their headquarters are on Easter Island but they have "active cells" in Tahiti and Hawaii. All members own knives with the birdman design carved on the handle, and have silver pendants with the Matuan's birdman symbol.*

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We can state with confidence that the statues did not walk clockwise around the island (nor counter-clockwise).

And then we hear about someone named Von Junzt who connects the tales of these spirits with the Ri Cult of Papua New Guinea, the Nan Modal [*sic*] sea dwellers, and the Esoteric Order of Dagon. It seems that the tales of Hiva given by the Matuans coincide "exactly" with passages in the R'yleh Text; there is similarity between Tulu and the god Cthulhu, and the statue in the center of Rano Kao [*sic*] is an exact copy of Cthulhu statues encountered in different parts of the world. As for the Birdman Cult, Von Junzt mentions "beings from Yuggoth" who

. . . are the same as those mentioned in the Brothers of the Yellow Sign, the Tngri Cult of Mongolia and various other places, and are the Fungoid Invaders referred to in the Pnakotic Manuscripts [say what?]

[It is difficult to comment upon all this except to suggest that the authors—seemingly Matuans—may have been experimenting with some illegal substance. But we can say that there is no single volcanic "center" on the island; there are four volcanic peaks with lakes in their interiors: Rano Kau, Rano Raraku, Rano Aroi, and Pu a Katiki. We can state with confidence that the statues did not walk clockwise around the island (nor counter-clockwise). They did not, in fact, walk at all; they were moved with rollers and ropes, probably after being placed on a sled apparatus. Rano Kau is a crater containing a lake; neither monolith nor

statue has been found in the lake, or near the lake. Divers have not found any subterranean cave at Motu Nui. Crystals are not found on the island. Not even Fungoid crystals.]

Barry Fell and the Epigraphers

Ultra-diffusionist theories claim that most civilizations can be traced to the genius of a few who spread enlightenment throughout the world. These theories generally develop in total isolation from legitimate scientific studies—an isolation which is either self-imposed or due to rejection of the theories by the established authorities. Pseudo-scientists generally speak primarily to organizations they have founded, and contribute to journals they have started and which they edit. This description fits the late Barry Fell to a "T".

Barry Fell and his supporters base much of their "evidence" on designs carved on rocks, claiming that these represent various ancient alphabets and languages. A self-taught epigrapher, Fell "translates" markings that geologists identify as natural weathering or marks made on field stones by plows, and rock carvings left by ancient Native Americans. Serious archaeologists study the rock carvings as evidence of native belief systems, but Fell and his cohorts "read" them, and ascribe them to various wandering peoples from the European sphere: Celts, Basques, Phoenicians, Libyans, Carthaginians, Arabs, Minoans and Egyptians.

Fell "deciphered" so-called Libyan inscriptions in Iowa, Quebec, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Oklahoma, in the Pacific Islands, and in Chile. Fell derives the Polynesian language [and the language of the Zuni Indians!] from ancient Libyan with some Anatolian and Asian elements thrown in for good measure. His line of thinking [*sic*] goes that the Polynesians were descended from Libyans who were in the service of Egypt, working in Sumatra's gold mines and "even Australia".

Fell's books sell incredibly well to a North American public that is intent on believing that an ancient "white" culture existed on this continent—basically a racist theory.

Professional epigraphists do not support Fell's translations: neither the Egyptian hieroglyphics, nor the Celtic *oghram*. There is even dissent in the ranks: Fell's claims for ancient Celto-Iberian glyphs are claimed to be Phoenician or Minoan by other amateur epigraphers. However, Fell's books sell incredibly well to a North American public that is intent on believing that an ancient "white" culture existed on this continent—basically a racist theory. According to a professor of Anthropology at Harvard, there is a curious 19th century racism in a view that traces American cultures and civilizations to the Old World, particularly back to Western Europe, the Celts, and Egypt. Why should pride in one's lineage depend on having ancestors from Europe or the countries around Egypt or the Fertile Crescent?

Much is made of the fact that Fell is a retired professor with a Ph.D. in Invertebrate Zoology and taught at Harvard University. However, mention of his name makes other professors at Harvard squirm with embarrassment. *The Harvard Crimson* (February 15 and 16, 1977) discusses Fell and his theories in detail, but that was before he published most of his books (and theories). Professional archaeologists and linguists do not take him seriously except to note the damage his writing has done to legitimate archaeological inquiry.

The major complaint regarding Fell is that he ignores evidence that displeases him, and his linguistic "evidence" doesn't stand up to scrutiny. Nonetheless, his books delight large numbers of wishful thinkers. Fortunately for those of us involved in Pacific studies, Fell did little work in that area, mostly concentrating on sites in the United States. However, he did take a crack at "deciphering" *rongorongo* writing, claiming that, because he came from New Zealand, he was somehow better prepared to translate the tablets. What he came up with was a retelling of the myth of the arrival of Hotu Matu'a to the island!

Eric von Däniken and the Extra-terrestrials

Von Däniken stands as the single most vexing source of misinformation about Easter Island (and other places!). He followed his blockbuster 1968 book *Chariots of the Gods? Unsolved Mysteries of the Past* with several others of the same ilk ("Over 3,000,000 copies in hard cover!!"

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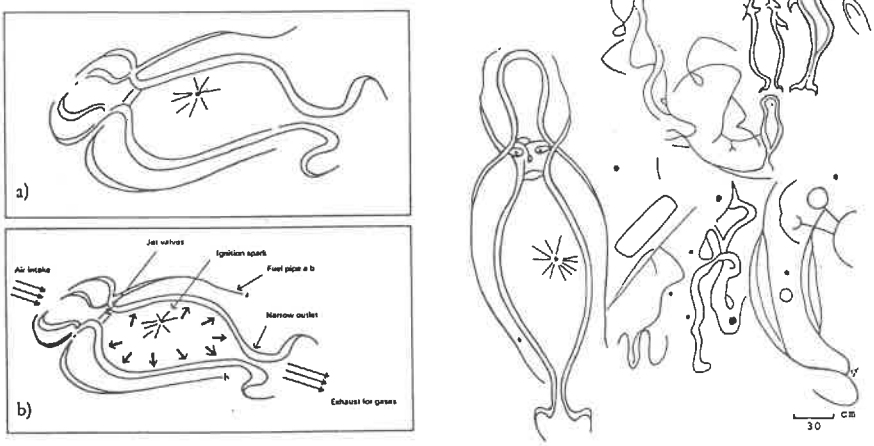
"The greatest archaeological sensation since the discovery of Troy!" ". . . a provocative theory that will fascinate a vast and eager public.") What this printing history indicates is that people will believe/buy anything sufficiently bizarre.

A favorite subject of von Däniken's is the Nazca Lines (obviously landing strips for the space visitors), but his imagination extends to virtually every corner of the world.



Left: Two sketches from von Däniken (1973) showing his version of a petroglyph on Easter Island and how it might have worked as a ram-jet engine. Right: The panel of petroglyphs as it actually is. The figure in question is an octopus with a human face. Many sea creature petroglyphs with human faces are found on Easter Island and most have legends that accompany them: Some are described as representing varua *(spirits), which could swim or fly.*

Von Däniken (1968:90) wrote about Easter Island without ever visiting the island. Thus we are treated to such statements as:

Whole mountain massifs had been transformed, steel-hard volcanic rock had been cut through like butter . . . . No trees grow on the island, which is a tiny speck of volcanic stone.

In *The Gold of the Gods*, von Däniken wrote that the statues were made of stone not found on the island, thus they must have been brought in by those busy guys from outer space. These erroneous statements have been quoted and requoted endlessly by those who are not familiar with Easter Island. I have never given a lecture about Easter Island without someone in the audience asking " . . . but what about the statues being made of stone not found on the island?"

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People will believe/ buy anything sufficiently bizarre.

[The volcanic tuff from which the statues were carved is quite porous, and readily cut with stone tools; it is not "steel-hard." Trees *did* grow on the island and still do today. By historic times the large trees had been cut down, but in prehistoric times the island had a forest. The island has good soil and is not a "tiny speck of volcanic stone." The statues were carved on the island from volcanic tuff, basalt, trachyte, and scoria—all of which are present on the island. The main statue quarry, Rano Raraku, still has several hundred unfinished statues lying in the quarry.]

In The *Gold of the Gods* (1972:166), Däniken takes a description from Francis Mazière whom, he says, excavated a bearded Easter Island statue with horns. In Däniken's words:

. . . this head sported a beard and it had faceted eyes of the kind insects have (and as we know them from Japanese Dogu sculptures). But the most extraordinary thing was two staves that sprouted from the head . . . There have never been horned animals on Easter Island! . . . It is ridiculous to deny that prehistoric artists—without drawing on their imagination—carved antennae as they had seen on the gods who came to them from the cosmos.

But what Mazière wrote about is not a statue, but a petroglyph (rock carving) from a lakeside site at Rano Kau (see page 23). After describing other figures on the boulder, he says:

One was . . . a head of a sort . . . a bearded head, with its eyes divided up like those of an insect. From its top there branched a great pair of stag-like antlers. It was exactly like the picture of a shaman . . . . (Mazière 1968:184).

[The petroglyph is an image of a bearded sea creature with human face and divided eyes (not "faceted"). The "antlers" are ears or tentacles with streamer-like flourishes. This form, which is probably a stylized octopus, also is seen carved on Easter Island's wood objects, and human/sea creatures are relatively common in the island's rock art. None are sprouting horns, and many include the elegant flourishes similar to this example (Lee 1992)].

Von Däniken (1972:166) sketched a petroglyph from Easter Island (probably from a photograph to judge from the distortion) showing an octopus with human face—one of the many sea creatures with human faces found in the island's rock art, and related to island myths. However, he "interpreted" the design as a ram-jet propulsion unit (see page 26). The head is described as an air intake, the neck as a fuel inlet, the body a combustion chamber, and the end part the exhaust for gases, and ". . . the engraved star would be a symbol of the ignition system".

As for the Nazca Lines, space prevents an in-depth examination of the fantastic theories that swirl like dust around these lines in the desert. Those who are convinced believers in outer space-beings coming to earth will not change their minds, regardless of the facts. Readers who wish information on this subject are directed to excellent books by Johan Reinhard (1986) and Evan Hadingham (1988). Reinhard effectively dismisses the astronaut theory in a footnote; Hadingham states:

Though it may be comforting to picture benign extraterrestrials who long ago managed to evolve beyond the present-day realities of war, pollution and world hunger, the genuine achievements of the Andean peoples represent a far more interesting story. Much of von Däniken's writing implies a patronizing, if not overtly racist, superiority to the 'natives' who were supposedly too stupid to create anything by themselves.

Egyptians, Phoenicians and Those Other Guys

A retired professor of vocational education was featured in the *Telegram-Tribune* (California), 2 April 1991. The article, by Patricia Porter, describes how professor Clyde Hostetter became . . . convinced the Polynesians came from the Persian Gulf—not from China or New

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Guinea as many archaeologists today believe.

. . . *[The ancestors of the modern Polynesian people can be traced back to 10,000 B.C., when they allegedly inhabited today's Turkey, Rumania, Greece and Yugoslavia. According to Hostetter, it was their descendants who reached South America at least 1,000 years before Columbus discovered America.*

The "key" to this idea came from designs scratched on a bowl from a market in Riyadh. The motif, which Hostetter states is a fertility symbol, is a diamond with a dot in the center; he decided that the number of diamonds on the bowl corresponded to a lunar month and this represented a lunar calendar made to predict a lunar eclipse 2,500 years in advance. Then, he found a magic calendar with the same symbols in the highlands of Sumatra. This made sense to Hostetter: "... the Bataks of Sumatra are descendants of ancient Sumerians." The calendar is inaccurate, he says, but that is "additional proof it was imported." And for further proof, it seems that the name, Hawaii, is the "diminutive for the ancient name of Sumatra—Hawa."

As for predicting a lunar eclipse 2,500 years in advance, what's the point?

[Diamond shaped patterns with dots are found virtually all over the world. The Polynesians are not from the Persian Gulf, Turkey, Rumania, Greece or Yugoslavia—we have DNA studies to prove it. As for predicting a lunar eclipse 2,500 years in advance, what's the point? And, the word "hawa" means, in the Hawaiian language, "defiled, filthy." The name for

". . . and we've left likenesses of ourselves so nobody will question our ever being here!"

Hawaii comes from the mythical homeland, Hawaiki].

More Egyptians

A little book by R. A. Jairazbhoy (*Ancient Egyptian Survivals in the Pacific*, 1990) may be considered as the "Ishtar" of the book world. The author claims that everything Polynesian can be traced back to Egypt, via Mexico and South America. It is, he states, "the only way of accounting for the remarkable parallels in belief with the higher civilisations ... ." He even drags in the birdman cult of Easter Island as coming from Egypt:

If one were to propose antecedents to the practice, the thought of the Egg of the Egyptian sungod [sic] *would have to come to mind.*

[This thought never once crossed *my* mind.]

Religion And Catastrophe

Tectonic Cleavage. Letter from B. D. N., 1990:

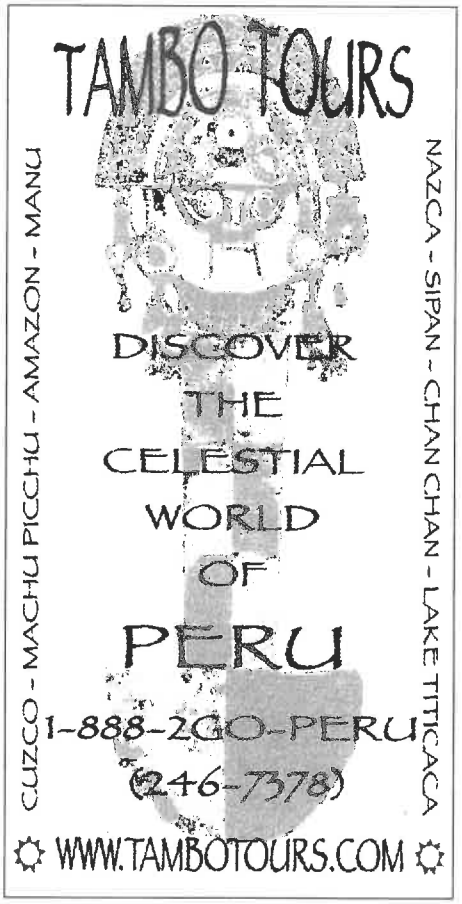
I felt that my data would help you to solve the mystery of its people; therefore, I am sending this data from my manuscript voluntarily.

Easter Island came from the shoreline of Chile and Peru with its inhabitants in a Tectonic Cleavage of ribbons of land from the South American Continent, as it would make the natives members of the Inca family of tribes that lived along the inner shoreline regions.

How? The separation of South America from Africa, was the Tectonic Force necessary in a westward direction to send such landmasses into the Pacific Ocean by way of a Tectonic Tidal Wave of such Tectonic Tonnage that was much greater than the tonnage of the landmasses—a counter-rotation of the Earth.

As a Tectonic Analyst and Biblical Geologist, I have sought to unravel the "Feat of the Dial of Ahaz" by Isaiah. The technology was written in Scripture in abstract form; that is, the counter-rotation of the Earth to scatter the inhabitants, was written as the turning back of the Sun by 10 degrees. It was done to fulfill God's prophecy, and it was not an occasion of science.

This same scenario of Tectonic



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Cleavage is similar to how Hawaii was cleaved from Baja, Mexico. The Hawaiians are Aztecs who were on the landmass when it was sent into the Pacific Ocean in the Westward Tectonic Tidal Wave.

Core-samples of the identifying landmasses will prove the geological facts, and ceremonial dress comparison will identify the cultures to be exactly the same for Hawaii-to-Baja and Easter-to-Chile-Peru. Scientists disavow God and therefore, they have become lost in all such kinds of erroneous speculations that is in our geology books, encyclopedias and atlases. All Earth Science is of God.

[The Hawaiians are not Aztecs. Easter Island did not come from the shoreline of South America.]

The Temple of Baal: Letter from N.B. Louisiana, 1989:

I had read in the Bible of men being raised up by God who went into the areas they were concerned with and tore down the Baal idols that the heathens worshiped. One such example is from Judges, where God tells Gideon to throw down the Altar of Baal that the Father hath and cut down the grove that is by it. Cutting down the grove would be one reason for the greenery disappearing. In those days they worshiped so many different gods.

Samuel ... tells how the Philistines (pagans) brought the Ark of the Lord into the house of Dagon and on the morrow he was fallen upon his face and he had both the palms of his hand were cut off. Samuel tells the people to put away the strange gods and return to the Lord .. . . I was wondering if some Godly men went in and threw down some of the statues on Easter Island and destroyed all the greenery (groves). Something to think about. The Bible contains a lot of answers if only it would be studied word for word.

[There is no point in trying to dispute what some folks think they read in the Bible.]

Psychic archaeology...

Coming Up...

The Nutcase Chronicles will continue in Issue 57 (Autumn 1999) with some of the most insidious kinds of misinformation, which I call Baloney and Half-Truths. This includes the over-used phrases, "...what ELSE can it be?" and "...could this be___?" (Fill in the blank with whatever loony idea comes to mind.) Those who employ this form of fiction-writing use jargon in an effort to sound scientific

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and favor Egyptians and Phoenicians as the originators of just about everything. Some writers of this ilk cite academic sources in such a way as to bamboozle the reader who may not be well informed. And lastly, we will hear of the ultimate folly: psychic archaeology. Bring on the crystal ball!

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Running of the bulls, continued from page 15.

Costumes lend a touch of Carnival to the festivities.

a fandango with the voluptuous Miss Cartagena

val and donor of bulls, sits on the same wooden bench as the rest of us. Rich or poor, everyone can jump into the arena with the bulls. A roar erupts from the crowd as a bull crunches three men against the fence. Miraculously, no one is hurt.

In contrast to the macho madness of the men at the Corralejas, the ladies of Sincelejo gather at cocktail parties in private homes with local and national beauty queens in attendance. As any traveler south of the Rio Grande knows, no Latin American festival is complete without a beauty contest—during Corralejas, contests are held at social clubs at night. For the socially less distinguished, there are open-air dances. When I was there in 1975, the stadium was transformed into a huge ballroom. Nearly a dozen bands blared strains of the local fandango while revelers danced in the blood-soaked sand.

Colombia's legendary hospitality shines in Sincelejo. After exchanging only a few words and a drink or two, people readily invite me into their homes, to any number of pre- and post-Correjelas parties. At one in particular, I luck out. Half a dozen beauty queens are here, dancing with one and all. I curse my two left feet but still pull off a passable fandango with the voluptuous Miss Cartagena.

Later, mingling with the celebrating crowds in the streets, I am reminded that the Corralejas is a festival of the people—a jamboree loved by all. "It's very provincial," said Carlos Duran, a local shop owner. "But it's all ours."

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The Corralejas are not for everybody—and not for the faint of heart–but are definitely an unusual festival few outsiders see.

The crime and violence found in other parts of Colombia are rare on the north coast. Still, be wary of pickpocketing and other petty crimes in large crowds. Be alert.

Sincelejo has a number of fairly good hotels. The easiest way to go by land is from Cartagena, and the nearest airport is at Monteria, a one-hour taxi ride away.

Buy your nine-dollar Corralejas tickets early in the day around 10 o'clock. Get there early as thousands crowd around the two entrances. Head for the least-used entrance on the east side of the stadium. To avoid looking into the sun, get seats on the west side.

It's January, the dry season, and you're in the tropics. It gets very hot. You'll need a red cape, one of the elaborately woven straw hats to protect you from the sun, and an iron stomach for the rum. Thus armed, you might survive the Corralejas.

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Ace of Clubs, continued from page 7.

After [redacted], we believe it. That the Club is still around, that we have somehow endured [redacted], and [redacted]—we owe this all to Cricket. Throughout it all, Cricket absorbed the brunt of the onslaught. In the end, it killed her.

Could we bring ourselves to subject the abused corpse to a postmortem? No. We lived through her anguish. Day by day, we felt her pain. For us, there was nothing to prove—no need to inspect the multiple contusions that eventually did her in.

Is the South American Explorers Club out of the woods? Hardly. With Cricket dead, the SAEC is forced to [redacted]

When we last checked the pet store in Pyramid Mall, we noted several guinea pigs for sale. One even looked like Cricket. But, no, we couldn't do it. Having witnessed first hand and up close the unbearable torture Cricket endured for the Club, we cannot in good conscience inflict such a fate on another rodent, although a guinea pig is a lot cheaper than [redacted].

Members, your Club is hanging in there. Of course, if we lose this one and have to pay damages, it's all over. We just thought you should know how things stand.

Believe it or not, we're not asking for donations this time around. If the Club can't somehow [redacted] to cover the [redacted], well, so be it. Maybe it's the end. Only time will tell.

More importantly for now, Cricket's grave is still unmarked. If you have some spare change, maybe you could see your way to contributing a little something to erect a simple memorial to a wee blameless critter that gave her all to the Club.

To all those special members who gave more than required to support the Club from the beginning, through years of turmoil, to its present glorious, bill-paying, magazine-on-time producing state, our thanks. Without you, we wouldn't even be a position to [redacted]. Our humble and grateful thanks to you all.

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Dave's ESL Café

http://www.pacificnet.net/~sperling/jobcenter.html

By far the greatest resource for would-be English instructors in Latin America. Post your résumé, browse through lists of ESL jobs in Central and South America, and leave a message on the electronic bulletin boards to discuss jobs and teacher training.

Escape Artist Home Page

http://www.escapeartist.com/si/sa.htm

This site bills itself "*the* web site for anyone moving out of the country." Tips for establishing citizenship, articles on finding jobs in South America, resources for moving overseas, listings of employment opportunities.

The Association of American Schools in South America

http://www.aassa.com

The Association of American Schools in South America (AASSA) seeks qualified educators to fill positions in private schools located throughout South America. Schools vary in size and offer a predominately U.S. based curriculum. In general, two year contracts offer housing, medical benefits, shipping allowance, transportation, home leave and competitive salaries. See their home page for more info.

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AmeriSpan is best known for their Spanish language immersion programs, but they also offer an extensive internship program. Opportunities include positions with Escuela Bilingue Mundo Maravilloso in Costa Rica, Mexico's Powell Institute, and the Instituto de Lengua y Relaciones Internacionales in Panama.

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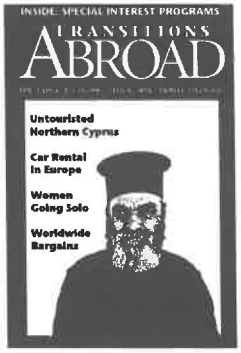

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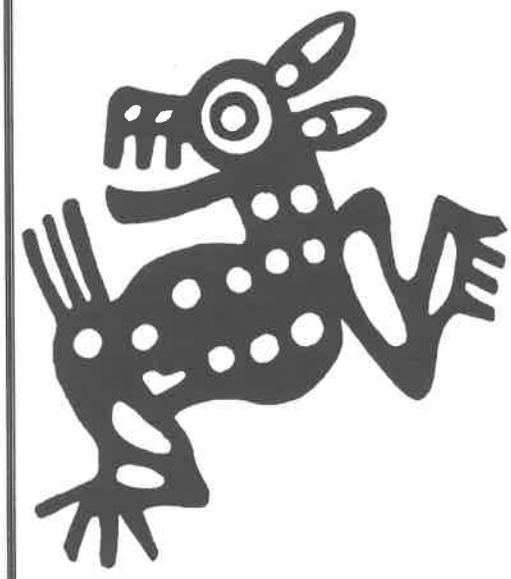

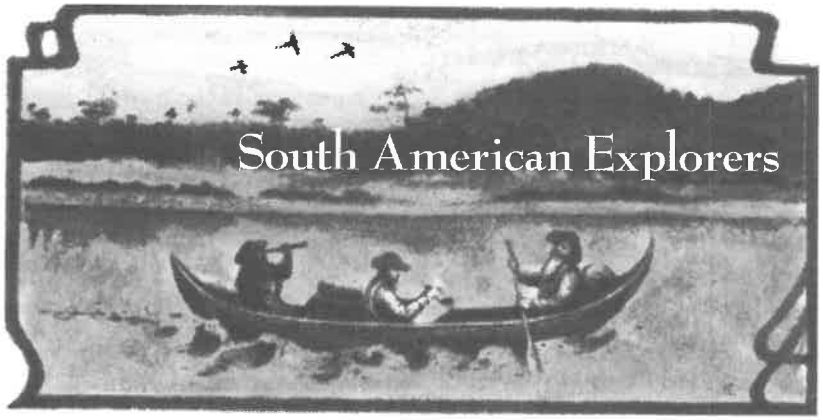

Cecil Herbert Prodgers

by Daniel Buck

At six feet, 265 pounds, with a thick drooping moustache on his upper lip, Cecil Herbert Prodgers looked like an Anglo-Saxon walrus. But what made him impressive went well beyond his extraordinary appearance. "Men of his caliber are seldom met nowadays," wrote a friend in 1924. "He was one of a thousand, big mentally and physically. Big in his ideas, big in his enterprises, and brimful of love and charity."

While working as a horse trainer in Chile in the early 1900s, Prodgers was enlisted by the Challana and Tongo Rubber Company to venture into the Tipuani-Challana region of Bolivia and persuade the Indians there to work as rubber tappers. His destination was "Paroma, the mysterious Indian capital, a town that no single white man had ever seen," as R.B. Cunninghame Graham described it in his admiring preface to Prodgers's 1922 book, *Adventures in Bolivia*.

At the time, Paroma was in the hands of renegade Bolivian soldiers who had thrown in with the locals, "half in the capacity of traders, half as military advisors." But Prodgers was not to be put off by either the remoteness of the jungle town or the fact that it was defended by entrepreneurial turncoats. In 1903, he set off from La Paz to Sorata by mule. He armed himself with a revolver, a Winchester rifle, and a letter from the sister of the renegade chief, Colonel Villarde.

From Sorata, Prodgers descended to Tipuani and on into the Challana valley. At last, he reached Paroma, "situated on the top of a green hill, with a river running through it, and houses and huts scattered everywhere about." He was quite taken with "the large trees that grew singly or in clumps of eight or ten or more [and] made the spot very beautiful."

Prodgers won over Villarde and the three hundred Indians with some beguiling nonsense, saying that he had heard of the "Challanas in London and New York as brave Christians and not savages," offering a good price for the rubber, and promising free land from the government.

Two years later, Prodgers embarked on a quest to find the fabled lost Jesuit gold treasure at Sacambaya. According to legend, the Jesuits had buried gold valued at $60 million just prior to being thrown out of Bolivia in 1768. The hoard was said to have been secreted near their mission in a "large cave" that it had taken "500 Indians two and one half years to dig out." Prodgers was shown a document that not only "described the kind of place...near the banks of the Sacambaya" where the trove could be found, but also warned that the wily Jesuits had booby-trapped the cave with "enough strong poison to kill a regiment." The document even inventoried the treasure: near the door, "an image made of pure gold three feet high, the eyes of which are two large diamonds;" in one room, "thirty-seven large heaps of gold;" and in another, "thirty-seven big heaps of gold." During three expeditions between 1905 and 1907, the hopeful Prodgers unsuccessfully excavated Caballo Cunco Hill on an island at the junction of the Ríos Cuti and Sacambaya. Unbeknownst to him, there had been no Jesuit mission at Sacambaya and no gold treasure. The story was a hoax.

Adventures in Bolivia is illustrated with Prodgers's black-and-white photographs and appealing water colors, done in a style somewhere between Gauguin and Grandma Moses. In a subsequent volume, *Adventures in Peru*, published in 1924, he told further tales of his life in the southern hemisphere—salvaging a shipwreck off Juan Fernández Island, horse racing in Peru, and mining in Bolivia. Prodgers died while the book was in press.

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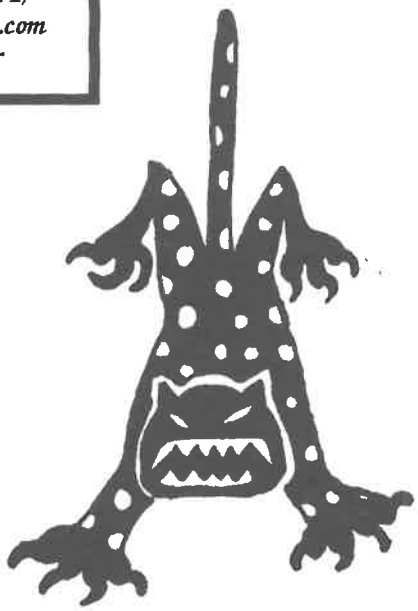

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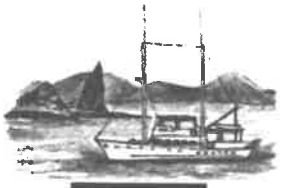

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Top Secret Bolivian Maps

Hikers and mountain climbers have long been able to purchase accurate, richly detailed 1:50,000 topographical maps of Bolivia at the Instituto Geographical Militar (IMG) in La Paz. But these very same maps are off limits in the United States. The general public can-

not buy them from the National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA), which makes them, or even view them at the Library of Congress.

The 1:50,000 maps are produced by the U.S. government under a bilateral agreement between NIMA (formerly known as the Defense Mapping Agency) and IGM that dates back to the 1940s. Paragraph 8(a) of the agreement provides that the "mapping products acquired under this arrangement will not be released by [NIMA] to third parties, individuals or groups, outside the U.S. government...."

Two years ago SAEC member Dan Buck donated 151 topographical maps of Bolivia to the Geography and Map Division of the Library of Congress. The library thanked him for his generosity. "Your contribution is an important addition to our effort to collect and preserve the history of American cartographic production," Geography and Map Division Chief Ralph E. Ehrenberg wrote, adding "I very much appreciate your interest in the development of [the library's] cartographic collections."

Several months later Buck went to consult one of the maps at the library and was told he couldn't look at them—they were off limits to the general public, available only to employees of the U.S. government.

Buck pointed out the absurdity of the situation—he couldn't see the very maps he had donated to the library only months earlier. Library staff lamented that its hands were tied, and referred him to NIMA, whose director, Major General James C. King, lamented that his hands were tied and referred him to the IGM in Bolivia.

According to King, almost all NIMA mapping agreements contain such restrictions, and added that his agency has no interest in changing these restrictions, "in order to ensure our long-term relationships and access to Bolivian geographic information."

In other words, thousands of topographical maps are off limits to the very taxpayers who paid the millions of dollars for their production, even in cases where the country itself sells the maps to the public. At last report, Buck had written to New York Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, an ardent foe of government secrecy, asking for his intervention.

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New Vaccine for Malaria?

A new type of vaccine that uses a virus' DNA to build up viral immunity may soon protect you from malaria. Researchers injected 20 human volunteers with a DNA vaccine for malaria. After six weeks, their blood showed a build-up of cytotoxic T-lymphocytes, "killer cells" that fight infections. The study only tested for an immune response in humans—not for actual protection against malaria, which kills some 1.5 million to 2.7 million people annually. But based on success so far, malarial-protection tests should start sometime this summer.

Traditional vaccines, which cost more and take longer to produce, use weakened strands of a virus to stimulate the body's immune response. These viruses must be grown in certain conditions and many need to be kept in cold storage. But DNA vaccines are much more stable, allowing them to be easily transported, especially to poorer countries without advanced laboratory facilities.

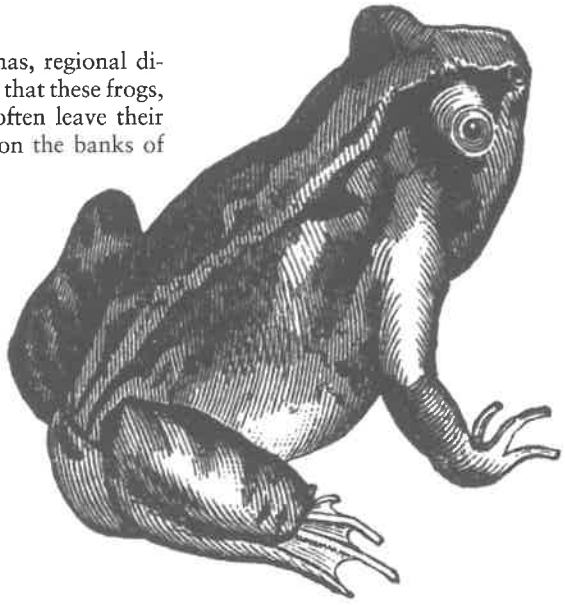
Introducing viruses into humans through traditional live vaccines, such as the polio vaccine, can in rare cases cause people to contract the disease they were trying to prevent. Says Stephen Hoffman, director of the Malaria Program at the Naval Medical Research Institute, "With a live vaccine, there's always a danger of it reverting and becoming infective. DNA can't become infective."

Frog Gone

To the puzzlement and dismay of experts from the Regional Fisheries Agency of Junin, Peru, the giant frogs have disappeared.

A close inspection of Lake Junin and five lakes from the district of Marca–pomacocha revealed that several subspecies of giant frogs are now extinct and that, although tadpoles swam aplenty, no frogs were found in their major breeding grounds.

Luciano Chauca Cardenas, regional director of fisheries, stated that these frogs, for unknown reasons, often leave their habitat in order to die on the banks of the lakes.



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If so, you kindly checked off the "Regular Membership" box, copied down your MasterCard number, scrawled your signature, but altogether neglected to tell us who you are and where we should send your new membership card.

It would be one thing if this were just an isolated incident, but believe it or not, this happens all the time.

Members, if you do not identify yourselves outside of a scribbled

on your renewal forms, we can't update your membership. Simple as that. Save us from hair-tearing frustration—do take a moment to fill out the Name, Address, City/State/Zip, and Membership Number lines.

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Ask the Doctor

Dr. Joseph Breault graduated from Tulane University School of Medicine with combined MD and MPHTM (Tropical Medicine) degrees. Currently the staff physician at the Ochsner Clinic in New Orleans, he has previously worked at the PHS Indian Hospitals in South Dakota and overseas in the Dominican Republic and Bolivia.

Tuberculosis

Q: When I was in tropical South America, I met villagers who coughed incessantly. Some months later, I heard that some had TB. I feel fine. Should I be concerned?

A. Every year, 8 million people worldwide are diagnosed with Tuberculosis (TB) disease; 2.9 million die from it. The World Health Organization estimates that 1700 million people have been infected with the germ. It is a serious problem in most third world countries including those in South America.

Your family doctor can perform a PPD skin test to tell if you have TB germs in your body. TB can be present as active disease or, more likely, as an infection that has not yet evolved into active disease and may or may not do so. TB disease symptoms include weight loss, night sweats, fevers, and chills. If TB infects the lungs, patients may cough up bloody mucus. In 15 percent of TB patients, TB germs infect other body organs and may not instigate coughing.

I would recommend that you get a PPD skin test. If it is positive, your doctor will follow up with a chest X-ray and might recommend putting you on a medicine called INH for 6 months.

Q.: What is the difference between having the disease and just being infected?

A: The difference is in the number of organisms. When an infected person coughs droplets and you breathe them into your lungs, you only inhale one or two TB organisms per droplet into your lungs. Your immune system usually seals off the microbes and kills them. If you breathe in a great number of germs or if your defense mechanisms are suppressed, then the TB infection grows beyond your body's ability to seal them off and control them.

A few hundred to a thousand germs (including those that have multiplied after inhalation) turns a TB skin test positive. The chance of the germs causing TB disease is about 2-5 percent in the first couple of years after a positive PPD, and then 0.1 percent per year thereafter. If you have a positive PPD skin test (signaling TB infection, not disease), taking INH for six months virtually eliminates the risk of developing the disease.

If the germs do break out and multiply, TB disease develops when you have rapid growth well past 1000 germs. For example, the typical tuberculous cavity in the lung of someone with active TB lung disease contains 1,000,000,000 organisms.

Q: If I get TB disease, what is the treatment?

A: Most people take four different medications for 2 months, until bacterial cultures show which medicines work best. All in all, medicine is taken for six months. There are many treatment variations depending on allergies, resistance patterns, immunosuppression, and so on. Most of the time, TB is easy to treat as long as you take your medicines faithfully.

Q: How can travelers avoid TB?

A: People who have TB disease in their lungs cough droplets into the air that you might breathe into your lungs. It takes a lot of close contact to spread TB, so the casual traveler is usually not at risk. If you are staying in a village hut, make sure no one in your sleeping room is coughing, particularly if the person has been losing weight, having night sweats, or fevers. If so, you should sleep elsewhere.

Q: What about the BCG vaccine?

A: The BCG vaccine is not used in the United States because those who have had it test positive with the PPD skin test—in the U.S., the usefulness of the PPD skin test to detect TB infection far exceeds the usefulness of the BCG vaccine. This is often not true for other countries where TB rates are much higher, where PPD skin tests are less used due to costs and widespread disease. The average traveler should not get the BCG vaccine. There may be rare exceptions (e.g., an anthropologist living in a high-risk village for a year) but these should be discussed with your doctor case by case.

You can e-mail medical questions to Dr. Breault at **joebreault@worldnet.att.net** Although the questions cannot be answered personally, a selection of questions will be answered and published in future issues of the South American Explorer.

Lima Club

Travelers are increasingly getting more bang for their buck in Peru as South America's financial markets adjust to Brazil's decision in January to stop using reserves to bolster its ailing currency, the real. The devaluation had an immediate dovetail effect on Peru's nuevo sol, which plunged in value nearly 10 percent in a few short weeks. In December, one US dollar was worth S/.3.10 nuevos soles. Eight weeks later, the value of the Peruvian currency had slid to lows of more than S/.3.52.

The devaluation triggered a frenzy of activity on the Peruvian stock market, which actually saw steady gains during the same period, as foreign corporations took advantage of their increased buying power.

In the short term, the trend is good news for travelers. But it came as anything but good news to the average Peruvian, who saw the value of his/her paycheck dramatically decrease. Something to think about when haggling over a price for that alpaca sweater in the marketplace this year. To the average foreign traveler, it's the principle. To the street vendor, *artisano*, or taxi driver, it's something much more tangible.

At the same time, there's nothing wrong with sticking to the principle that foreign travelers should not have to pay exorbitantly higher prices than nationals for goods and services.

In keeping with that principle, the Lima Clubhouse will now make available "information sheets" to members and nonmembers alike on topics ranging from "what that taxi fare should be" to current listings of reputable hotels and hostals, broken down into various price ranges. These information sheets will be available for free in the Lima Clubhouse...but there will be a collection jar prominently placed for donations to help us recoup our research and production costs.

There's a new face in the Lima Clubhouse. Adam Shoer, a new full-time staff member, comes to us from a long jaunt in Hong Kong, where he worked in a family manufacturing business. Adam—a long-time volunteer in our Ithaca Clubhouse—is keeping our various databases clean and up-to-date, and making sure members passing through the Club find the information they need.

It was our pleasure to have Diana Morris, Quito Clubhouse business manager, with us in Lima for an extended visit. Diana worked closely with Lima staff in retooling our information services in preparation for a new millennium—a new era for this organization that will include a Cusco Clubhouse.

Which should come as a reminder: Keep those donations coming! You can be a Cusco Clubhouse Founding Member for your US tax-deductible donation of $1000. (Of course, it doesn't have to be that much. We'll be grateful for whatever you can spare.) Contact our Ithaca Clubhouse for details.

Thanks are in order to Clubhouse volunteers Ian Wilcock and Marc Stoll, who have helped keep our services just as fine as they could be. And to our Peruvian staff members, Felícita Nuñez and Julie Cruz, whose contributions to this organization are very important and very, very much appreciated.

A round of applause to club members Toby Douglas, Kathryn Martell, Annie McKee, Carolyn Brooks, not to mention SAEC Director of Latin American Affairs Melanie Ebertz, for help with handcarries.

After more than a year an a half of serving as Lima Clubhouse Manager, Rick Vecchio is moving on. Rick writes:

"I had been a daily newspaper reporter for six years when I dropped it all and came to South America; a sabbatical, I told myself, to live in Peru, learn Spanish and see what else was out there. And that's how I came to the Club. I love my life in Peru. I have the most beautiful, wonderful fiancée. I have no plans to leave. I'm totally enthralled by the people, the culture, the history, the music. And this Club has only enhanced that experience. For that I'll always be grateful. As for the future, the sabbatical is coming to an end. The journalistic urges still tug. So maybe it's time to be a reporter again."

Thank you, Rick, for everything you've done for the Club!

Quito Club

So far, 1999 has been challenging for Ecuador. The sucre has been hit hard—the devaluation is great for travelers, but a hardship for those living in Ecuador. For ten days the country was without gasoline.

Melanie Ebertz lined up a number of great presentations for the Quito Club. Recent topics included exotic fruits and permaculture farming, the work of an Ecuadorian artist, the endangered Andean Bear, the Tagua Nut (a substitute for ivory), and a photographer's view of indigenous communities.

Aside from the presentations, there's other fun things to do at the Quito Club: Join our intern Jeff on a Saturday hike, take part in our weekly runs in Parque Metropolitano or with the Hash House Harriers, or come along with those who salsa 'til the wee hours!

We've started a recycling project funded by the Dutch and German Embassies and supported by Fundacion Natura. Please use the bins in the garden to discard plastic, tin, and newspapers.

As always, thanks to all our members who continue to support La Tola (see p. 51) with donations of money and time. A special thanks to those who helped with a 60-page translation needed by La Tola and the Salesians to get a grant.

Special thanks to our committed volunteer staff who work hard every day to provide our members with up-to-date information, the Club services, and a warm smile.

Member Tim Tadder, a great photographer, computer whiz, and avid climber, has created www.cotopaxi.com—a source for excellent information on climbing in Ecuador.

The Quito Club continues to work with Amigos del Turismo to provide the Ministry of Tourism with guidelines for raising standards in licensing guides and improving security in the National Parks.

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Because of the significance of this expedition, a nationally known Television crew will film a documentary for a major network.

For more information please contact:

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Dedicated to improving education and the quality of life in developing communities.

Tim Currie and Janice Davies
Lima Clubhouse
timandjan@rttinc.com

The 800 people in Lima's Virgen de Fatima *pueblo joven* are among the very poor. Life is hard. The nearest water source is a kilometer away and many of the children spend the day alone at home while their parents are at work.

Flipside Schoolworks hopes to build a PRONOEI school in Virgen de Fatima. PRONOEI is a Peruvian and internationally funded early childhood education program. Once built, the school will be a kindergarten, daycare, play school, and public education center. The PRONOEI program will teach young children basic health, hygiene and nutrition, the importance of clean water, and the dangers of drugs, alcohol and smoking. The children also get a head start learning the alphabet, numbers, shapes, and colors. All PRONOEI schools receive fortified milk and biscuits for each student.

The community has already allotted land for the school and will hire a teacher. They believe that an early start in education will benefit the whole community over time. The PRONOEI project promises to be an accomplishment the whole community can take pride in because with a little financial support, they will change their future.

Flipside Schoolworks has already been active with projects both within Canada and abroad. We helped collect donations for the "La Tola" orphanage for Youth At Risk in Quito, Ecuador. This past Christmas, we organized a Christmas party for the children of Virgen de Fatima.

If you can help, please mail donations to:

Flipside Schoolworks
4927, 48 Street
Innisfail, Alberta T4G 1N1
Canada

La Tola

Los Niños Migrantes

Diana Morris,
Quito Clubhouse
Business Manager
explorer@saec.org.ec

Every week at La Tola, we see new street kids looking for a place to sleep. Thanks to caring volunteers at La Tola there is always shelter.

Heavy rain in early 1999 damaged the roof of the classroom at La Tola. Many puzzles and games were ruined. We hope to replace them as soon as we can afford it.

Western Oilfield Environmental Services in Canada is helping to finance two new projects to provide work for the boys of La Tola:

1. A small gardening service that offers grass cutting and yard maintenance.

2. A small business that will pack Ecuadorian cigars in hand-crafted, engraved cigar humidors for sale as Christmas presents in Ecuador and in North America at stores and craft fairs. The cigars will come with information about La Tola.

A few of the older boys are looking for construction work around Quito, but competition is stiff—the devalued sucre and depressed economy make employment difficult to find. Unfortunately, those lucky enough to get jobs have had to deal with a few business owners who refused to pay when there were no adults looking out for the boys.

Chris and Ken, two members from England, are collecting camping supplies for our La Tola outdoor program. If you are flying from England to Quito and can bring some of these donations, please contact the Quito club!

Thanks for all your donations to La Tola. A special thanks to Bob and Carol Silva who send a generous donation every month!

The SAEC Quito Clubhouse collects donations and organizes volunteers to participate in nightly activities and monthly outings for La Tola's "Los Niños Migrantes." Donations can be sent care of the Ithaca office, 126 Indian Creek Road, Ithaca, NY 14850.

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Impressions of Paraty, Brazil

Tom Cockrem

Costa Verde unfolds below, green—very green—and, like so much of the coast near Rio, stunningly beautiful. The road curves and bends, hugging the dented coastline all the way to Paraty. I look out the window past fields and copses down on the perfect half-moon bays, each dotted with its own set of forested isles.

Along the way, towns like Itaguai, Muriqui, Frade, Angra, have sprung up around these perfect bays, inviting me to stop, stretch out, and relax. From the blocks of condominiums, I gather others must have gotten a similar message.

Paraty sneaks up on me. Has it already been four hours since Rio? The bus stops just off Avenida Roberto Silveiro, the main strip that leads into the old part of town. Old Paraty is cordoned off. Only horse-drawn carts are allowed inside. This is a Portuguese colonial town restored to its former grandeur, its authenticity jealously protected.

I plan to stay one night, sufficient time, I think, to explore the old town. The ten or so streets are curiosities, slop-

Tom Cockrem is a travel writer living in Melbourne, Australia. His work has appeared in Australian and New Zealand newspapers and travel and in-flight magazines.

ing inward to a gutter that runs along the middle. The paving, a *pes-de-moleque* (orphan's feet) design, is made of river stones of various sizes laid unevenly and higgledy-piggledy.

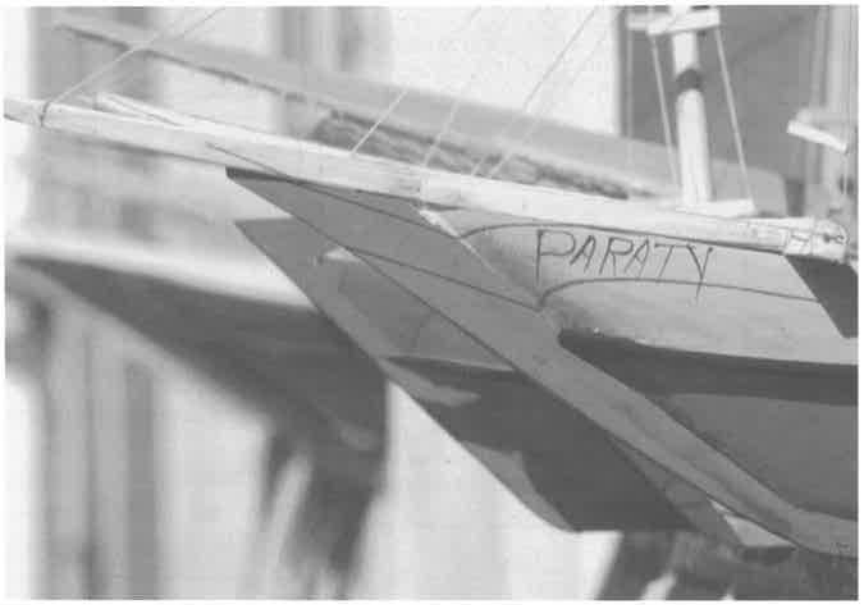
Santa Rita, one of Brazil's oldest and most elegant churches, is here, built in 1722 for the "freed and mixed-blooded population." I stroll along the main jetty in the early morning and gaze at Santa Rita in all its splendor. The Paraty fishing boats, famed for their quaint design and vibrant primary colors, bob in the harbor.

Old Paraty's stately homes are immaculate, the paint so fresh it looks wet. Once predominantly white with doors and windows trimmed in blue, the tradition has given way to a whole range of new colors—green, orange, even mauve. Little wooden balconies, shuttered windows, hand-painted tiles...all proclaim that, in its heyday, Paraty was a ritzy locale.

Paraty grew up on the old Guiana Indian trail which wound up through the Facao Mountain ridge to the gold mines of Gerais. Donkeys hauled the precious metal down the narrow mountain trail to the coast—a treacherous run. Paraty's harbor, was renowned for its excellence, its favorable winds, and deep water. Here, the ships came to carry the gold to Rio. Some gold disappeared along the trail, and some was lost at sea to pirates who operated from hideouts along the coast. So great was the loss to pirates that, at the beginning of the 18th century, a new route was opened linking Minas Gerais overland to Rio. It's key position lost, Paraty's fortunes plummeted.

Forgotten for almost a century, the town revived with coffee—the new "gold"—coming down the same old trail. With coffee came wealth and a restoration of the style and sophistication Paraty possessed in times gone by. Ships laden with coffee returned with Baccarat crystal, Austrian furniture, Carrara marble, grand pianos, and French liquor. Disaster returned with the railway, a death blow for Paraty since the train cars with sacks of coffee bypassed the old port. By the end of the 19th century the population had dwindled from 60,000 to 600.

Paraty rose again. In 1966, UNESCO proclaimed the town a National Monument. Today, Paraty's gold is tourism.



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From Jeff Rothman, contador@earthlink.net:

1) I booked a round trip flight Los Angeles–Lima for $432 (it would have been cheaper if I didn't use a credit card) with Great American Internet Travel, Tel: 818-981-7755. It's a direct flight with LAN Chile, and I get American Airline Frequent Flyer Miles to boot.

2) When you get back from a trip, send a report by e-mail to Footprint Handbooks (publishers of the *South American Handbook*) at handbooks@footprint.cix.co.uk. If the editors find your information useful, Footprint Handbooks will give you a 50% discount on the book of your choice, plus shipping (which will run between 2.5 and 5 pounds sterling). I got the *1999 South American Handbook* delivered for $23.00 (instead of $39.95 plus tax).

3) According to representatives at LAN Chile, the entry fee to Chile is US$20 U.S. However, the entry-fee stamp on your passport is good for multiple entries, for as long as your passport is valid.

From Robert Kirk, robert_kirk@hotmail.com:

Although told in the United States that cash advances on our Visa debit card were limited only by our account balance, every bank we used in Ecuador told us that we had a $400 cash advance limit. Banco Guayaquil and Banco Austro were the only two banks in Ecuador that would process Visa cash advances. Although we'd ask for $400 worth of sucres computed at the rate of exchange of the day, our bank statements showed withdrawals that ranged between $404.30 to $443.73. I suspect that although I signed the transactions at one exchange rate, the transaction was actually conducted at another rate.

Once, I requested one million sucres in Quito, which was equal to $187.73 at the exchange rate of the day. Imagine my surprise when I saw a charge of $1,877.33 on my bank statement. Banco Austro quickly took responsibility for the transaction; they had withdrawn ten million sucres instead of one million sucres. "Oops!" they said, "One zero was added by mistake!" They assured me that they would credit my account in dollars within a couple days. However, it took three weeks for them to transfer nine million sucres to our account—which amounted to only $1,371.00 because the sucre had devalued 20% by then. This left us $318.60 short. It took another three weeks of pleading before Banco Austro credited the rest. All in all, the process was quite tedious. Although the mistake was Banco Austro's, they always acted like it was my problem, not theirs. Luckily, I was living in Ecuador at the time. If I hadn't been able to nag them three of four times a week for six weeks, I'm certain I would not have been reimbursed—Travelers beware!

Do you have any tips you picked up during your travels? File trip reports! Mail us at:
South American Explorers Club
126 Indian Creek Road
Ithaca, NY 14850

or e-mail us at:
tips&notes@samexplo.org.

See your name in print and bask in other members' thanks and admiration.

Common Birds of Amazonian Ecuador: A Guide for the Wide-Eyed Ecotourist.

(Number 6 in the series: "Parques Nacionales y Conservacion Ambiental"

Chris Canaday (text) and Lou Jost (color plates)

Quito, Ecuador: Ediciones Libri Mundi, 1997. 132 pages, with maps and 6 plastic color plates for field use.

During the time I've worked in the Ecuadorian Amazon as an environmental geologist and guide, ornithologist friends have pointed out hundreds of bird species to me. I learned a few names, but I was still overwhelmed by the 1,600-plus species in Ecuador. Last year I made a trip down the Rio Aguarico with a copy of Chris Canaday and Lou Jost's well-written guidebook for budding birders. With it, I left with at least a dozen more names committed to memory.

Common Birds of Amazonian Ecuador describes and illustrates the fifty most frequently seen species. A casual visitor should be able to identify at least half the birds in the book during a short jungle excursion—this is gratifying. The guide is organized into a group of flashy birds (parrots, macaws and caciques) and other groups based on the environments where you might spot them. This scheme allows you to quickly find the correct illustration and description from your dugout canoe, observation tower, or the porch of your cabana before the bird has flown off.

Physical and voice descriptions focus on distinguishing features and lack the arcane vocabulary of traditional bird guidebooks. For instance, the Crimson-crested Woodpecker's voice "sounds like a scolding squirrel" and the description of the Blue-throated Piping-Guan reads: "This turkey-like bird is usually seen in the tree tops and flying across rivers. It can be identified in flight by its long neck, white head, broad wings, and long tail."

During my trip down the Rio Aguarico our dugout canoe landed at Secoya, Quichua, and Shuar villages. Since *Common Birds of Amazonian Ecuador* lists bird names in twelve different languages, five of which are spoken by indigenous tribes, I used this guidebook to start up conversations. The smiles and laughs at my foreign efforts to pronounce their names for the birds helped bridge two very different cultures and stimulated evenings of stories about how these birds fit into their everyday life as food, pets, and characters in mythology.

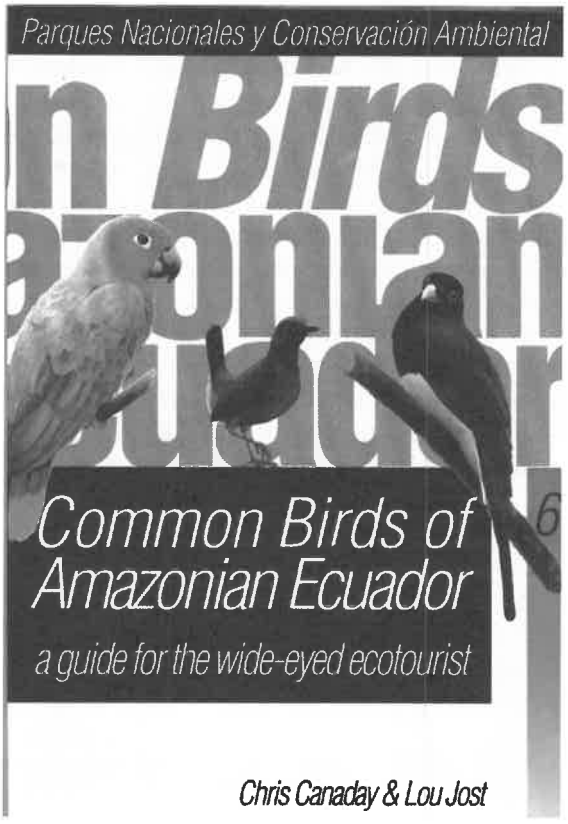
Artist Lou Jost painstakingly rendered each bird illustration in the book from years of field observations and cloistered observation of museum specimens. The result is a collection of beautiful and accurate depictions (with inset geographical distribution maps). Indeed, this glossy paperback would make an excellent coffee-table book. Thoughtfully, the authors decided to add six removable plastic-coated plates of the birds for use in the field on those all-too-common rainy days.

Chris Canaday's conversational style in the introduction sets a tone of invitation for us neophytes to the world of birds. He covers the process of how birds are named, avian habitats, scientific organization of species into families, and the fundamentals of bird watching. Although the book is ostensibly written for the Cuyabeno Reserve, it can be used throughout the Ecuadorian Amazon and in surrounding countries.

Both authors are committed to fighting the illegal trade in tropical birds and to conserving land that is quickly disappearing in Ecuador due to oil development and colonization. The last chapter focuses on this problem and explains effective steps readers can take to help.

Common Birds of Amazonian Ecuador is a must for visitors to the Amazonian lowlands. Don't leave the Amazon to tell folks back home you saw "some parrots, macaws and a bunch of other birds I can't remember" because you were overwhelmed by the plethora of information in traditional bird guidebooks.

The authors are in the process of edit-


Parques Nacionales y Conservación Ambiental
Common Birds of Amazonian Ecuador
a guide for the wide-eyed ecotourist
6
Chris Canaday & Lou Jost

ing a Spanish version of the book, and more guides to the flora and fauna of Ecuador are planned in the series "Parques Nacionales y Conservacion Ambiental" in the coming years.

—Mark Thurber

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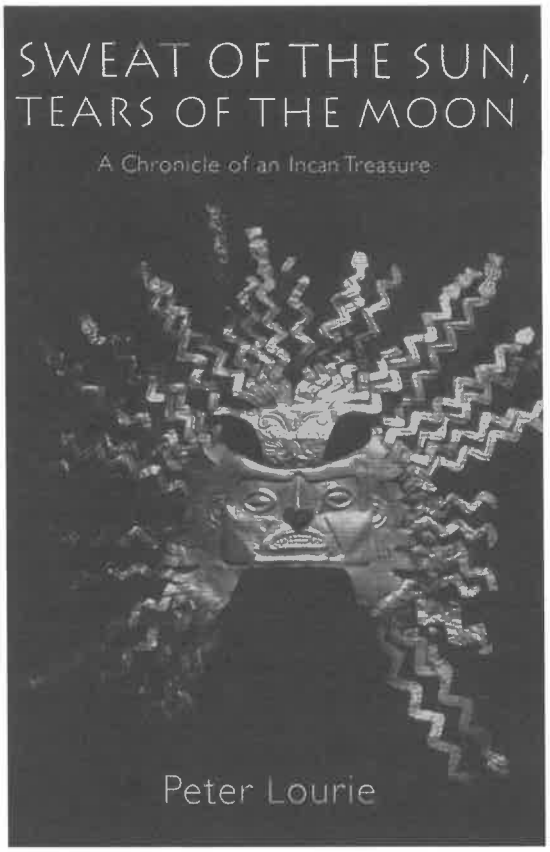
Sweat of the Sun, Tears of the Moon:A Chronicle of an Incan Treasure

Peter Lourie

Bison Books, University of Nebraska Press, 1998, 307 pages.



November 16, 1532 in Cajamarca: Francisco Pizarro's 160 man army slaughtered 7,000 Incan soldiers. The Spaniards suffered not a single fatality. When the doomed Incan ruler Atahualpa suddenly found himself Pizarro's prisoner, he offered a deal that his greedy captor readily accepted: a large room filled once with gold and twice with silver in exchange for his freedom. In the ensuing months load after load of stupendous riches streamed in from the far reaches of the empire until finally the promised deed stood accomplished. However, the deceitful Spaniards hadn't for a moment seriously considered releasing Atahualpa. In an act of treachery they summarily garrotted him on July 26, 1533.

But Pizarro made a costly miscalculation when he killed his valuable hostage—the ransom they received amounted to only a small portion of Inca gold. According to Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, the first historian of the conquest, the greater part of Inca gold had yet to arrive from Quito. When the Incan general Ruminahui learned of the execution he immediately sent it elsewhere. Oveido wrote, "It is known with great certainty that Captain Ruminahui left with twelve or fifteen thousand warriors, and he carried away sixty thousand loads of gold...to where he thought it best to hide." That spot, according to legend, lay in the cloud forest mountains adjacent to his birthplace of Píllaro—the cold, wet, foggy and dreadfully inhospitable Llanganatis of the Ecuadorian Andes.

If Oviedo provided a credible account of how the treasure was amassed and its general whereabouts, a 16th century Spanish soldier named Valverde ostensibly pinpointed the more specific location. A poor man who married the daughter of an Indian chief of Píllaro, he apparently became very rich following a series of gold-finding forays into the Llanganatis. On his deathbed he detailed his route to the treasure for the King of Spain, an account known as the Derrotero de Valverde (Path of Valverde). The famed British botanist Richard Spruce uncovered a copy of this document in Ecuador during the early 1860's, and its subsequent inclusion as the final chapter in his posthumously published "Notes of a Botanist on the Amazon and Andes" of 1908 brought it to public attention—but not before word of his discovery leaked out and led to a very intriguing expedition by a New England sea captain. Even the staid Royal Geographical Society became involved in this ongoing saga, and through them the honorable George M. Dyott. All of them, and numerous others, thought they were onto something big.

Enter Peter Lourie, a young American anthropological student conducting fieldwork in Ecuador during 1982. After meeting Llanganatis treasure seeker Andrés Fernández-Salvador, he found himself so inexorably drawn into the same tantalizing quest that he quit his research in order to concentrate on his new obsession. His life became intertwined with a coterie of serious seekers, sharing the same passionate interest and treasure-hungry, self-destructive behavior. Eventually he broke through the haze and hooked up with the most respected authority on the Llanganatis mystery, the indefatigable Eugene Brunner, a concentration camp survivor whose knowledge of the treasure stemmed from over forty years of dedicated research and on-site experience.

Sweat of the Sun, Tears of the Moon is a triumph for the author and a pleasure for the rest of us. Lourie's prose shines in every chapter and makes even the most mundane situation interesting. He's introspective, not averse to self-criticism, and candidly reveals the toll that treasure hunting levies on the participants. He avoids clichés, wordiness, and redundancy with the fervor of a creative writing professor (which he is, at Middlebury College), opting instead for crisp, delectable descriptions: "Dusk dissolved into darkness; the pickup appeared to drive itself. The green glow from the dashboard made Andy's hands on the wheel seem radioactive, like clumps of disembodied energy." Rich, textural passages and the enchanting mood they create are woven into the very fabric of this rewarding book.

Peter Lourie could successfully write about anything. It's our good fortune that he chose such a worthy and overlooked subject as the lost treasure of the Llanganatis.

—Mark DeMaranville

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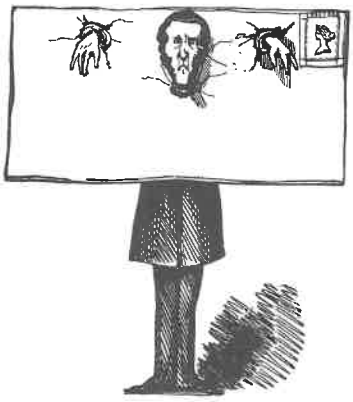

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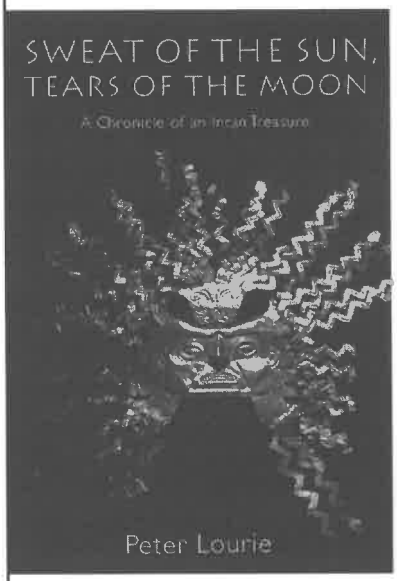
By Peter Lourie



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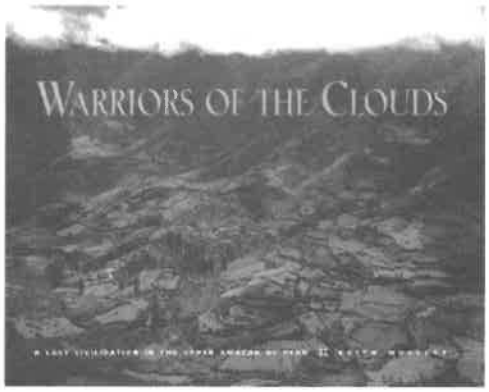

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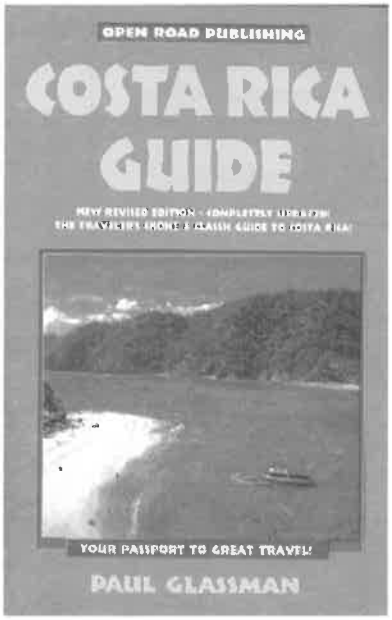

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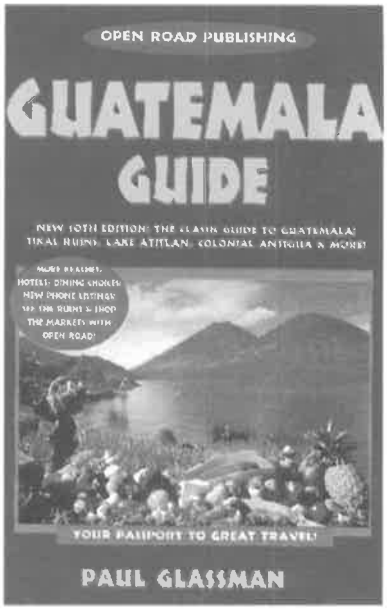

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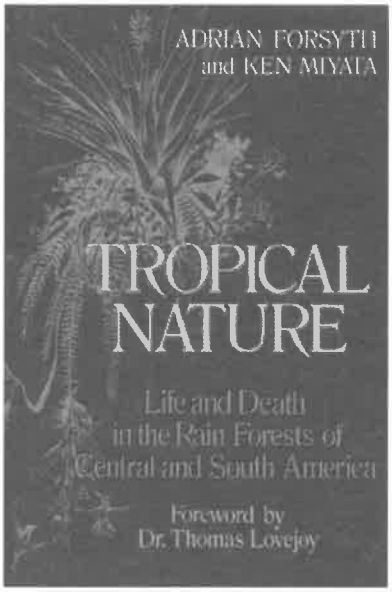

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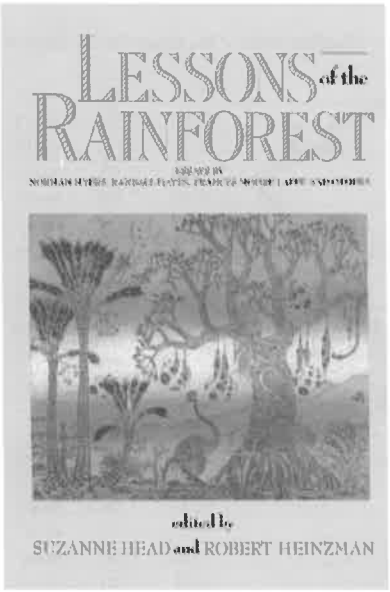

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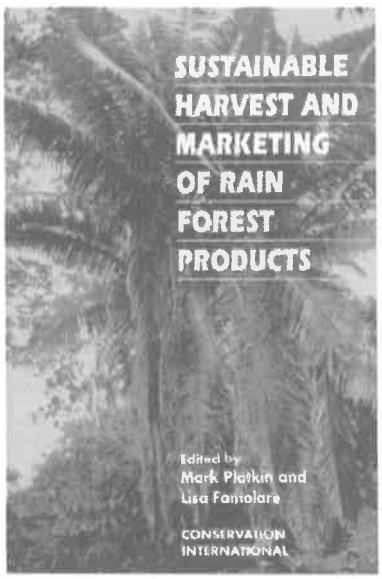

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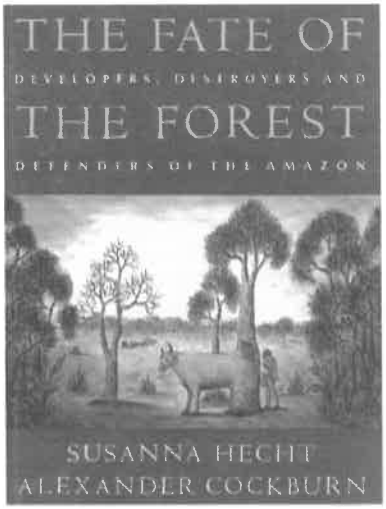

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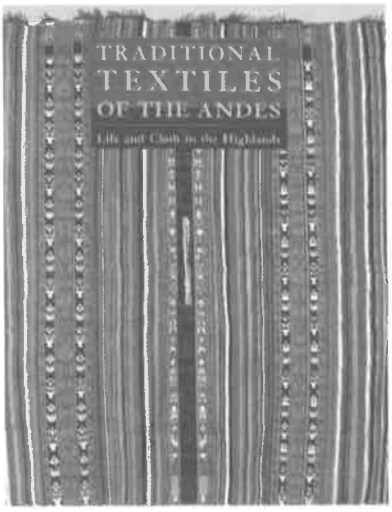

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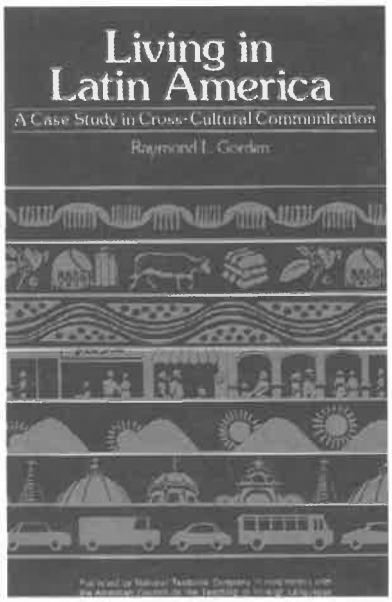

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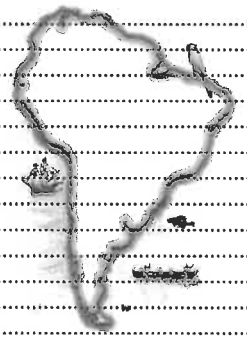

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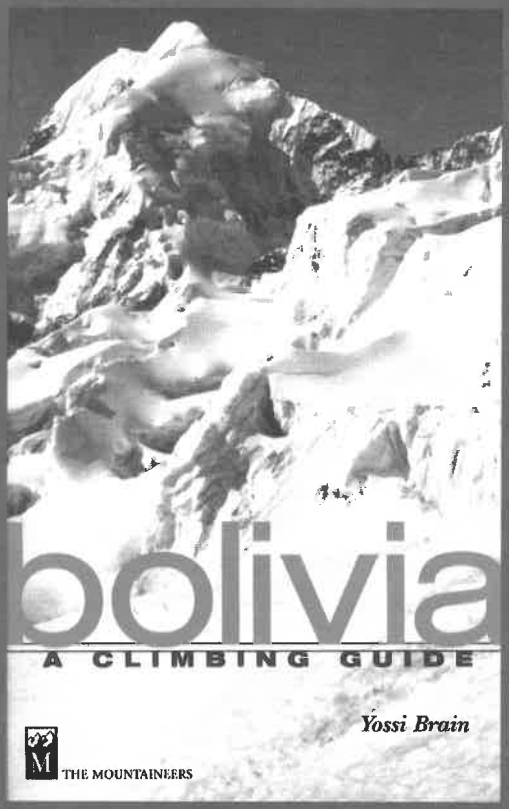

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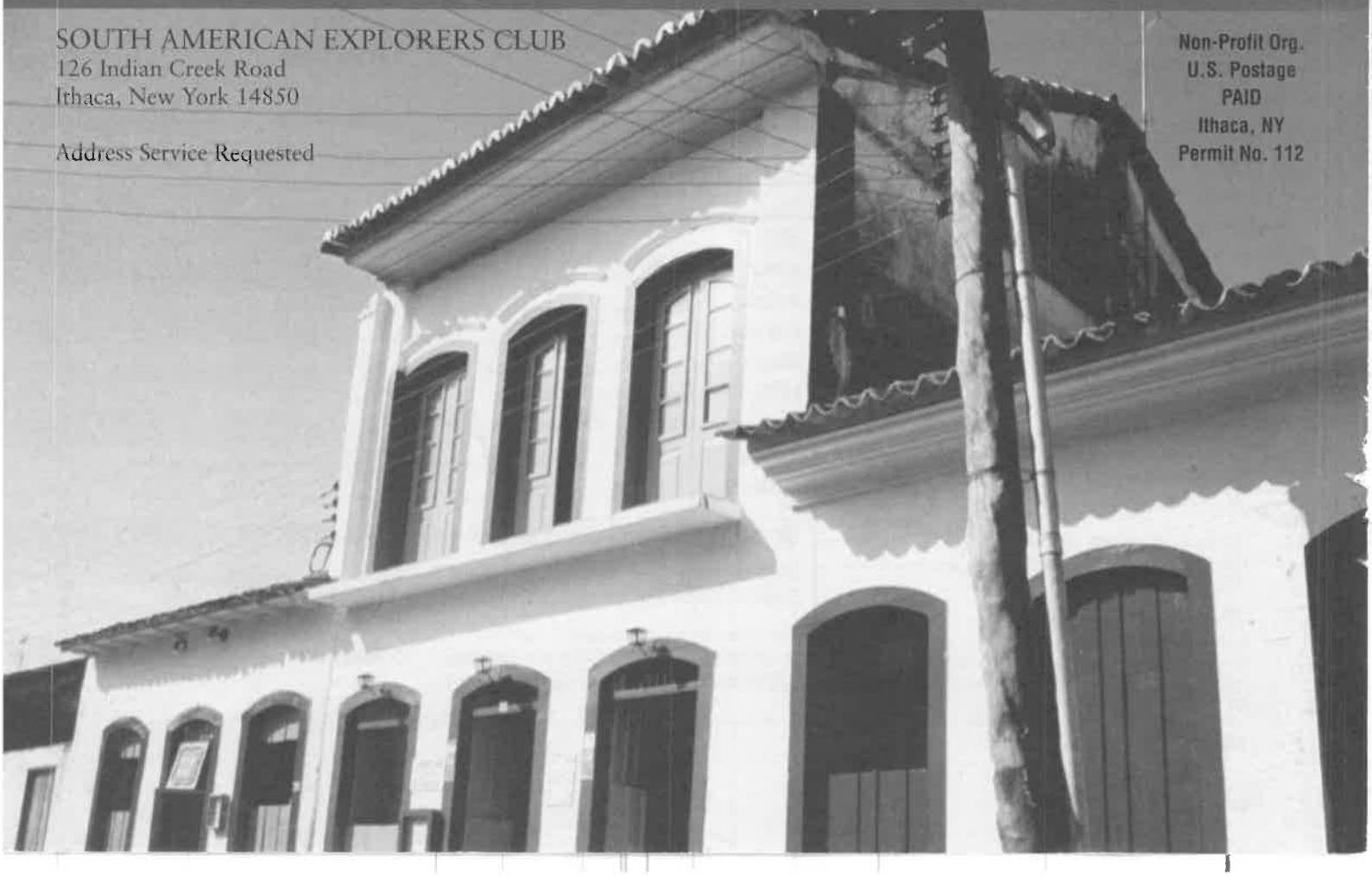
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